Heartspeak
2002
Volume I

Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

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SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION
Manapakkam, Chennai – 600 125, India

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Published under license by
Spiritual Hierarchy Publication Trust
"Divine Bliss"
North Block, 2/3, Judges Court Road,
Kolkata - 700 027

First Edition 2011 10,000 Copies

ISBN 978-93-80335-80-3

Printer:
Multivista Global Ltd.,
Chennai, India.

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Publisher's Note

It is with great pleasure that we present this volume of talks given by our Master, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, during 2002.

Included are his talks given in northern and southern India, as well as his New Year's message and other messages delivered at the birthday celebrations of the Masters of Sahaj Marg. The talks reflect P Rajagopalachari's well-known ability to communicate deep spiritual philosophy in a simple, accessible way to people of all ages, from all walks of life and cultures. He provides a source of guidance for all spiritual seekers around the world.

These talks are thought-provoking, encouraging us to dive into a deeper understanding of our spiritual journey. They impart the underlying message that we have been given the opportunity of being incarnated as human beings, at a time when a capable spiritual guide is willing to serve us and raise us towards the goal of human life. Our future is dependent on us taking responsibility for our own individual transformation, with the loving guidance and support of the Master.

1

New Year's Message

Shakespeare says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." I think that with the avatar of Lalaji Maharaj who came on this earth to give us Sahaj Marg, followed by Babuji Maharaj, we are now in a time which can truly be said to be the flood tide of spirituality. We are all very happy that this hall is full, maybe four thousand people here, but if you think of how many years Sahaj Marg has been in existence in this world, it is a drop in the ocean.

And if you think further, that among the one and a half or two lakhs of people who are today following Sahaj Marg in various, shall we say, depths of application, with various degrees of sincerity, with certainly very different aspirations, how many are truly seeking that which Sahaj Marg alone, I dare to say '*alone*' can offer today? Maybe a handful? Maybe less? Every day that we lose is a day lost for progress forever. Progress is of course not measured in terms of days and months and years. But when I look back, and when we see those brothers and sisters who have fallen by the side,

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1 January 2002, Chennai, India

roadside, as we say, and we wonder where they are today, and if there is anyone who can see where they are, and we are able to see how few have really made it to that sublime world which we call the Brighter World, we would realise that Sahaj Marg has to be tackled, pursued, followed, practised in a much more serious way than we have been able to do so far.

There is no use in making resolutions which we are going to break. All resolutions end up being broken because a resolution is a desperate effort to try to force ourselves to do something which we have not been able to do, and which perhaps we are not willing to do. So, there is no use in making resolutions. What we have to do is to sit down and start. There is no place for words in Sahaj Marg. I think the minimum and the maximum that we need to say is embodied in the prayer – three lines, fifteen words or sixteen words. Those are all the words that we need in Sahaj Marg, and more than that is superfluous.

Anything about which we have to say too much, I believe is lacking in merit. Anything which we have to praise too much, does not deserve praise. Anything which has to be repeated again and again means that it is not followed. If you have to go on repeating the ten maxims of Sahaj Marg every morning, parrot-wise, it is better to learn the multiplication tables because they would serve us better in the market place. So, there is no scope, indeed there is no need for praise of Sahaj Marg, for praise of anything in Shri Ram Chandra Mission. If you want to offer your homage, your love, your gratitude to the Masters, there is only one way of doing it, and that is to practise sincerely so that one day you will reach them in the Brighter World and they will say, "Welcome. I am glad you have made it!"

Sahaj Marg is a very serious business. It is not a *tamaasha* [fun], it is not a game; it is not a celebration. Of course, there must be joy in sadhana; there must be no compulsion. But I have always felt that perhaps God made a big mistake in giving human beings choice, because the human tendency is that when you are allowed to choose, invariably you choose the wrong thing even though you know what is right. *Invariably*, because it is the easier thing to choose. Like people say, "To fall off a ladder is easier than to climb up." You see, how babies start walking. They have to go on falling and falling and falling, until they are able to walk.

So, given a choice, I think there is this perversity in human nature which makes us choose the wrong thing because we know the right thing is always there. We can always choose the right thing tomorrow! Not today – tomorrow. But as Babuji said, "Will tomorrow come?" Not everybody can say, "Tomorrow will come for me," or even, "This afternoon will come for me." So there must be this urgency of feeling that if I don't do it now, I may not be able to do it at all. There is a story I think, in one of the Puranas or the Upanishads, where a young man goes to a guru and says, "I want to start spiritual work, spiritual life." The guru says, "Let us have a bath in the river." And while they are standing waist-deep, the guru says, "Do you feel an urgent need for spirituality?" He says, "What is this urgent need?" "No, no, there must be a sense of urgency." He says, "What urgency? How urgent?" He pushes the disciple under the water and he is struggling for life. And when he comes out, he says, "More than that! How much you struggled for life in those few seconds that your head was under water? Your *search* for spirituality must be even more urgent. Otherwise, go back to school, go back to your family, be happy."

I have found that many abhyasis are unhappy in Sahaj Marg. They say, "We have lost our old friends. There is no more companionship. Even our relatives shun us." Brother Kannan yesterday in his wonderful talk said, even in his Sanskrit college he is labelled as an atheist. Yes, of course, at the top of the hill it is always lonely. At the bottom, a lot of people to eat with, drink with, make merry with. At the top, you are alone. That is one aspect.

The other aspect is, if you don't follow Sahaj Marg sincerely enough, you know in your heart that you are not doing enough, you are not progressing enough – not because the *marg* [path] will not progress, but because you are not doing enough to progress. And, you have passed a certain frontier where there is no going back to the old life. In a sense, you are an outcast from a previous society, and not yet assimilated into the society into which you have blundered, willingly or unwillingly. That is the cause of much of unhappiness of abhyasis, who say, "I'm neither here nor there. Sir, I was happier before. I had friends. I had an occasional drink. I could smoke. I went to the movies. People came to my home; I went and called on them. Now, nothing! Only Sahaj Marg!" [Laughs] Yes, of course, "*Only* Sahaj Marg!" Sahaj Marg has to be practised, has to be cultivated until it becomes an all-absorbing *obsessional* force in your life, when there *is* nothing else to think of.

I found only one human being in whom there was this obsessive, compulsive attachment to Sahaj Marg; one person only who spoke of nothing but Sahaj Marg; one person who practised nothing but Sahaj Marg, who lived Sahaj Marg, and that was my Master. It is a pity that many of you have not seen him, moved with him, lived with him, because something would have, by contagion, rubbed off and shown us what Sahaj Marg is, how it should be lived, and how, when we die, there is some assurance that we will go to the brighter world. Without that sort of *absolutely total dedication*, where we think Sahaj Marg, where we speak Sahaj Marg, where we live Sahaj Marg, our satisfaction will only be partial. We shall always live in doubt. "Am I in the right way? Should I not be back in Tirupati with Venkatachalapati? Should I not be back in, I don't know, some other temple in Thanjavur reciting my Vedic mantras? Was I not happier then? Where is my happiness now?"

We have not earned that happiness which comes by giving yourself to something wholeheartedly, totally. If you are partial, you only get partial. If you are full, you get full. Knowingly or unknowingly, ignorantly or wisely, stupidly or not, with all the superstition in the world, in our *purvaashrama* [life of an individual before being initiated by the guru] as I should say it, when we were temple-goers [following] ritualistic oriented worship, there was a definite sense of satisfaction. You built a fire, half a dozen *purohits* [priests] came, your relatives looked on lovingly when you chanted a few mantras, poured a lot of ghee into the fire, and everybody said, "What a nice man! So religious, so godly, so god-fearing!" That you got! Now nobody tells you that.

I am sure no abhyasi here has any relative who says, "How nice you are! How divine you are! How godly you are!" They say, "What is this nonsense, always closing your eyes and sitting?" And today they must be saying, "Why are you not in bed instead of sitting here, looking at some old fool talking to you? About what? About some brighter world of which you know nothing! At least in temples you see the idol, you see the worship, you receive some *laddu* or some stupid bananas. What do you receive here?" So, you are putting yourself in a situation where these doubts assail you, attack you, because you don't know what you have received. And why don't you know what you have received? Because you have not developed the capacity to look into yourself and see what is happening to you.

Every day people write to me, ask me, "I'm not able to read my condition." We have never made a serious effort. We doubt that we have the capacity to do it. And when you have the doubt, you will not be able to do it at all. In spirituality, *doubt poisons the will*. That is what Babuji Maharaj said. We must remember this very carefully: where there is doubt, there is failure. If you think you cannot read your condition, you will never be able to do it.

Diary – we are not maintaining. We buy because the covers are beautiful; there are beautiful photographs of the Satkhol ashram. How many of us write diaries? At least, if you write the diary you will be compelled to think, "What to write? What did I feel?" You will have to write. Even if you felt nothing, you will write, "I felt nothing today." But you scratch your head, "Oh, there is nothing to write." So you close your diary and put it away! So, you see, there is a *need* to be very, very serious about Sahaj Marg. It is your life. More than that, it is the life of your life – *pranasya prana*. There is no use in talking about pranasya prana and that guru gives us life. Where is that life going? Has his life entered your life, and become the life of your life? Are you able to experience it? If not, why not?

So, since you asked me to speak, I'm speaking. I hope you are listening carefully, and you will attempt to follow the practice sincerely, with dedication, with absolute faithfulness to the practice, so that within a few short months you will be able to feel in yourself that, "Yes, there is something in me which has changed. Yes, I see it in myself. Therefore, I don't need others to tell me anything about it. I am happy, so I don't need other people to make me happy. I am content. I don't need anything else to make me content. Where I sit in peace, thinking of my Master, I have the sole companion in my life whom I need. I don't need anybody else's company." Then you will find happiness in Sahaj Marg, you will find fulfilment in Sahaj Marg. You will be alone, but never lonely. You will have no relatives, but you will have the one friend without whom we can do nothing, and whom we don't have though we have many friends! He who has no master may have many friends but no real friend. He who has the master may have only one friend, but he is the *real* friend, the true friend. And may that true friend be with you, guide you, help you, and take you to Himself.

Happy New Year. May the Master bless you.

Thank you.

2

Natural Living, Simple Living

Namaskaar to everybody. I am told there are more than a hundred new abhyasis. I was supposed to meet them separately, but of course as usual new and old mix and everybody is anxious, everybody is eager, to see, to listen; but how many are anxious to follow? Big question mark! This morning we had two lines of new entrants. Now I am sure we have some more who want to join the Mission – and this is going on all the time. Sometimes I feel that this spirituality is like an ocean where the waves come and go back; waves come and go back; nothing stays. And then they say that is natural; the tidal cycle is natural, the effect of the moon and the sun. Isn't it? The tides are created by the moon, the winds, the sun, and the gravity of the earth retains the water, so that it doesn't move off into the air.

I think here also what happens is, people come in a sort of burst of enthusiasm – "Aha, spirituality! Let us see what it is like. So many people are going, so let us also go." And then when you go back outside into the world, there are suns, there are moons of attraction,

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26 January 2002, Ahmedabad, India

and people just disappear. So that sort of spirituality is no good, and people who come like that and leave like that, they don't benefit. Of course some people argue philosophically that even if you throw a man into the water and pull him out, he will be somewhat cleaner than when you threw him in. No doubt – but it doesn't stick. On the contrary if you are very dusty, that water may make it cake on you; all that dust will cake on you.

So, especially for new aspirants, those who have joined the Mission in the last two years, people who are now going to sit in meditation, nobody will benefit unless you know what you are here for. When you come here you must know what you want. Number one, you must be perfectly clear in your mind that *this is what I want*. Number two, you must have already determined, by talking to people, by reading our literature, that Sahaj Marg can give you what you want. Otherwise it is like a man wanting to buy silk and going to a meat shop, and saying, "Give me a yard of silk." He will laugh at you. He will say, "We are selling meat here. We are not a cloth shop."

So most of the problems arise because people don't know why they come here, what they want, what they are looking for, and of course at the bottom (the base line as the businessmen call it – the bottom line) everybody wants peace, prosperity, happiness. This aspiration everybody has got, this need all humans have. We all want peace, we all want prosperity, we all want health. Many come because they have problems in their work; many come because they have problems in the family. Money problems today everybody has, whether you are rich or poor. There are always daughters to be married off, sons who need jobs, sons-in-law who are problems in the family because they ask for more and more. Are we coming here to have such problems solved? I am sorry to say that Sahaj Marg does not offer solutions for familial problems. They are for us to solve.

Saansaarik jeevan [family life] is a necessary way through the evolutionary path. This is essentially – Sahaj Marg is really a family *marg* [path]. That means it is a *grihastha marg* [path of the householder]. We have to pass through life; we cannot renounce life and become *sannyasis* [ascetics] because sannyasis are no happier than us. They also have stomach problems, they have, I don't know, so many problems. They have to beg for their food. And today in the well-structured sannyasi orders there are also levels of the hierarchy, so they have bosses, they have assistants and it has become like many other organisations, religious and spiritual, where there are people who give orders, people who obey orders, and friction in between. Everything is going on in the same way like in the corporate world outside.

So we have to face the family life as something which is essential. It is like a man travelling by sea in a boat and you know you are going to get seasick; you know there are inherent dangers. "If the boat capsizes I may drown, I may be eaten by a shark." When we undertake a journey we have to be prepared for everything. If you are not prepared, stay at home. So in a *gribastha jeevan* [life of the householder] there will be problems. Once you get married you are going to have children. Once you have children, boys have to be trained, they have to be educated; girls have to be educated. Both have to get married. Boys must have jobs, *daamaad* [son-in-law] must have a good job so that he can look after your daughter who is your *laadli* [darling]. Where does it end? And then if you live long enough, God willing, you have grandchildren. They have to be provided for. "No, no, now my sons are all right. But what about my grandchildren, Sahab? I love them very much." And if you are blessed (or some people will say, cursed) with too long a life, you will have great-grandchildren.

I often think what Maharaj Dhritarashtra must have felt when the Mahabharata war ended and he had lost all his sons. He was father to so many and none remained. What must have been his feeling? More to the point, what must have been Gandhari's feeling when she lost hundred sons? A mother suffers more than a father, and yet they were there; they accepted the fact because from the beginning they knew that life is life; it cannot change. You are not the only person who guides the destiny of your children and your grandchildren. They have their own way of creating their own destiny. Dhritarashtra could not change by one *anu* [atom] the behaviour of Duryodhana; on the contrary Duryodhana was affecting his father and disturbing his mind, giving him wrong ideas. An uncle who should have known better, Shakuni, was corrupting the youth of Dhritarashtra's household.

So, there are so many forces which control the destiny and guide it, and one person does not have very much to do with it. You are part of a conglomerate of forces which are pulling in different directions, and they determine which way this point will move. I mean you have all studied some fundamental physics and mathematics. You know the parallelogram of forces: if the same thing is pulled from two sides where will it go? It will go in the direction of the stronger. It doesn't mean this is very strong. If this is a little more strong that is enough. So given two desires, which is stronger? One side you have the desire for spirituality; the other side you have the desire for material life, for pleasure, for prosperity. Which is going to succeed, which is going to pull you, depends on *you*. Because you are the person who has the desire – *desires*, and you can cut down the desire to a proper consistency or proper level or proper dimension in your life or you can, by brooding over it, multiply it, make it so big that you have lost control over it.

Therefore you have to decide, every one of you, what you are going to do with your desires. There is no fate; there is no destiny. Spirituality says each individual human being *is* the master of his or her own destiny. You want to study and you also want to watch the test-match – not possible. The wise people, they sit down and study, and they hear the result or see it the next morning in the newspaper, it's enough. The one who cannot control his desire wastes his money, wastes his time watching cricket match after cricket match, comes back home sick, tired, and of course a little foolish.

So don't think there is any external *khuda* [God] or *daata* [benefactor] or somebody who is forcing his destiny upon you. We are, each one of us, creating our destiny, moment by moment, and if you cannot keep your horses under control, the *rath* [chariot] will go off the road and destroy, not itself but also you. This is the great image that is used in one of the Upanishads. So, the horses they say are the *panchendriyas* [five senses], the driver is the *manas* [mind], you are the master sitting inside and you have to guide your destiny. Spirituality offers you the possibility of guiding your own destiny, shaping your future, knowing well that you cannot change your past. In our past there were so many things: a Patel will always be a Patel, a Gujarati will be a Gujarati. He cannot suddenly become a Madrasi or a Punjabi, but he can become a human being.

Now, generally, we say business people are heartless. To a large extent it is true, because when your *whole* idea is only to make money, heart has no function. I mean you cannot also have a heart and also have a business. Somebody owes you ten thousand rupees; if you have a kind heart you will say, "*Jaane do* [forget it]. Poor fellow, he cannot give," and your business will not succeed. So heart and money don't go together – remember this. In Gujarat I am always hearing this, that "This man owes me four crores, that man owes two crores. I owe somebody seven crores. I cannot pay because he will not pay me," and it is a chain. Ambabhai will not give Babubhai; Babubhai will not give Sauradbhai; Sauradbhai will not give Kasibhai;

and Kasibhai gets a *supari** because he owes a lot! I used to think supari is something which is in a *paan* but this is something in a gun. {Laughter}

So this is very common in places where money is predominant – only money, nothing *but* money. "Under any circumstance I must have my money back." Then you go to the extreme of even trying to murder somebody, doing him harm. You were celebrating yesterday the anniversary of the wonderful Gujarat earthquake. I don't know what is wonderful about it, because there are places where they have an earthquake almost every day in the earthquake tectonic zones. What is there to celebrate in an earthquake? But I read there was one gentleman who was caught in the lower floor, and he could have escaped but he was looking for the money he has hidden in the room. It was reported in the newspaper. Sitting in Madras I read about this and I was sorry for that fellow, because in trying to recover the money, the floor collapsed and he was dead. Otherwise he could have come out. You could make money again, but can you have life again?

Similarly you can kill a person but can you give life to a person? Do people think when you give a supari that it is easy to kill? But there are people who are trying their hardest and they cannot have a child. Have you thought these things? "What am I doing?

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* *Supari has two meanings: 1) an areca nut, which is in paan, the betel leaf chewing mixture; and 2) in Hindi slang, a contract killing. Getting a supari means someone has hired a contract killer to kill you; giving a supari means you have hired a contract killer to kill someone else.*

Am I supposed to create or am I supposed to destroy? Is money so valuable that I should threaten to take another man's life for something even which is not mine, because I have to take from Babubhai and give it to Kakubhai?"

So, you see, society today stinks. The more material we become, the less of love, the less of affection, the less of kindness, the less of humanity; and we become what we should never become – we are becoming slowly *shaitans* [devils]. This is true of all societies all over the world. Wherever money is predominant the heart has to go. Where the heart is there, you can have a comfortable, happy life with a lot of friends but not prosperity; you will have enough.

My Master used to say that Lord Krishna had promised him in one of his intercommunications with him that every sincere abhyasi will get what he needs for his living: food, clothing, shelter. Shelter does not mean a mansion; clothing does not mean silk; food does not mean *chaat masala* [fast food spice mix] and pizzeria – so popular in Gujarat every day; you go and stand under a tree and spend two hundred rupees. Krishna's promise does not include all this. Krishna says *dal roti* [pulses and unleavened bread], *dhoti kapda* [simple clothing], something a little better than a *jhopdi* [hut] you will all have if you are sincere, if you are loyal, if you are human beings. *If you are human beings*! And what is that which makes a human being a human being? The heart. I don't mean the physical heart – the heart of humanity. Animals have physical hearts, too. Isn't it? But you see how they behave? The strong must eat so they kill the weak. We should not become like that. Is it not better to be a human being, have what is necessary for existence, be looked upon as a good man to whom people will go for help, for advice, whom they will support when it is necessary to support him?

There is so much talk of Mahatma Gandhi in Gujarat. You have the pride that Gandhiji was a Gujarati. Very good, but except to bring him out like some sort of an *utsav murthi* [an idol for display] on Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti, what else do you do with Mahatma Gandhi in Gujarat? You are using that poor old man to cover all your corruption, all your guilt, all your misdeeds. Don't you think so? Is it enough to have M.G. [Mahatma Gandhi] Roads in every city in India? The same thing is done in other states with their wonderful people. You go to another state and it is full of Ramakrishna and Paramahamsa Road, and Vivekananda. You go to Tamil Nadu, it is full of Thiruvalluvar Salai. He [Thiruvalluvar] was another saint in Tamil Nadu. You go to Maharashtra, there are Gokhale Roads and Tilak Marg. The same hypocrisy everywhere! You use your great men as a front to cover everything that you can do which is wrong, which they never wanted you to do.

You sing, "*Vaishnav jan to tene kahiye je...* [He is a true Vaishnav...]," and what do you do? You are not Vaishnav *jan*! "No, no, *hoon Patel chhu* [I am a Patel], [laughter] *hoon Vaishnav nathi.* [I am not a Vaishnav.] Gandhiji said it only for Vaishnav *jan* [people]." Very convenient! This is corruption; this is lying to yourself.

So if you want spirituality, you must understand that the minimum is assured, not the maximum, in your material life. Everyone will find a son-in-law for his daughter but he will not be a mill-owner or a Maruti manufacturer or a spare part fellow or somebody who makes stone particles and mixes with rice or builds houses. He will not be a builder who cheats people, who weakens the mix so that every earthquake will take two hundred thousand people off Gujarat. He will be an honest man who will make an honest living, therefore will have the minimum that God promises, and a happy life. He will have a happy family. His family will feel happy; because his family is happy, which means your daughter and son-in-law are happy, you will be happy. Now I know many people who have multi-millionaire sons-in-law and they are not happy. Why? "Oh, he never comes home. Morning he is in New York, afternoon he is in London. My daughter rarely sees him. My grandchildren even don't know who is their *papa* [father]." Are you happy? So look for happiness and contentment. These are values in life which you don't get.

In Gujarat I see everybody is rich but nobody is happy. Why not? Why should rich people not be happy? People on the street who are earning their money pulling *thelas* [carts], selling *subzi* [vegetables], they are laughing, they are happy. Do you think about it when you travel in your motorcars and on your scooters? "Why are they happy and not me? I have everything they don't have. They live in *jhopdis* [hut] and I live in a mansion. They sell vegetables and make fifty rupees a day; I make fifty thousand a day. Why are they happy and I am not happy?" Because that is where happiness is, this is where the riches are. Not prosperity – *riches*.

So, this message has to be clearly understood that Sahaj Marg does not make millionaires. It does not mean that we are against it. If you are a natural millionaire, do it. If you are a natural musician, do it. But even musicians – there are great musicians who never sang for money. Money came because it cannot avoid it. If you open the windows, air will come in, light will come in. Of course there will be some mosquitoes (some *macchars*), some *makkhi* [flies] because they also want air and they also want light. "No, no, I don't want mosquitoes. Close everything. Have an air conditioner," and you feel cold or you feel hot. You understand?

Natural living, plain living, *simple* living – this is Sahaj Marg. Guaranteed minimum for your existence, to make you happy, ensure you minimum comfort, as I said. Shelter, enough to cover yourself with comfortably, and basic amenities of life – these are guaranteed to all simple honest human beings who have a heart which will share. We see that there are so many societies in this world where they have probably one litre of water per day per head and they are happy. Then there are stories of utmost humanity during wartime, how in the London Underground whenever there was bombardment by the Germans, people shared one loaf of bread and fifty families ate. They kept themselves alive waiting for a better day. One man didn't share and had stomach-ache and everybody else died of starvation.

Unless you share you shall not have. If you only take and take and take and keep, that thing will kill you which you have accumulated, whether it is money, whether it is weight, whether it is anything else. All that you need to sleep is one room; a twenty-four-bedroom house is of no use to you. You are only having to close so many doors, close so many windows, have sleepless nights thinking into which room which thief is breaking. Therefore you need protection, you need watchmen, you need insurance policies, you need more money. So when you have money, you always need more money – remember this.

That is why people are never happy. When they have hundred they want two hundred, when they have two hundred they want four hundred, when they have four hundred they want eight hundred, and it is not just want; it almost looks as if they have created a need for more. "What to do, Sahab? My income-tax, I am paying thirty-three lakhs a year." "Yes, but you are paying income-tax because you have an income." "No, no, I don't like to pay." Then you suffer. How can you not pay income-tax when you have an income? You have to go by the law of the land. "No, no, but what does the government do? I earned it." Then you have to tell them, "Look into your heart and see how much of it you really earned."

If you are talking of physical work the *thela*-puller [handcart puller] is putting in more effort in one day than that you put in one month. Is it right or wrong?

They do more physical labour and work in one day than any one of us does in one month. Why are they not compensated for all that? If you are talking of mental work, intellectual work, people in laboratories who are paid two thousand, three thousand, ten thousand rupees a month, and people like stockbrokers here... What is the comparison? They get ten thousand rupees, you get ten lakhs. "No, no, I am intelligent. I can play with shares." You only play, it is not intelligence. If you are lucky you make; if you are unlucky like brother Harshadbhai Mehta, we go. [Laughter]

So always remember – more money means you need more money to keep it, and that increases because every year you are making more, you have to keep more, and you have to keep your heart away. You have to see that people who need money don't come to you. I know big bosses who make billions of rupees; they are so afraid of having to give a donation to a beggar or some charity they will send them away. Very near my house there are big families – the watchman says, "No, no, all our charity is handled by our office," as if they have a charity department [laughs], part of their Finance and Accounts. What hypocrisy! And what do you do with it?

So, spirituality, my dear friends, brothers and sisters, does not offer health or wealth or prosperity. It offers you a human life, a human existence – a human life full of peace and contentment – two things which are lacking today. Peace and contentment nobody has. If you have a dog at home, you see how nicely it sleeps. It just [sighs heavily] and is asleep. And our rich people, and even poor people or middle class people, they all are sleepless because we are always thinking of how, how, how to make more and more and more. I am saying so many things about money here because I am in Gujarat, which is *dhan kshetra* [land of wealth].

I once gave a talk which they called *'Marushu'.* [What about me?] In Gujarat it is famous – marushu ("What do I get out of it?") *"Theek hai, Sahab, hum* [It is okay, sir, I come for] meditation *aate hein*. What will I get?" *Get* nothing, but you will *become* something, instead of becoming heartless, pseudo-human beings. We only look human, we are not really human. We are all corrupt, we are avaricious; we have no heart. We will not give even to a dying person on the street. We will become human beings who will respond with life, who will respond from the heart, who will respond with love. That assurance spirituality gives. And when you become that, you will know what it is to be a human being, and what it is to be like the rest of the world: what you have which they don't have, what it is that makes you happy, peaceful, and therefore healthy, and what is it that, with all their modern medication and everything else, they are sick all the time. They are sick in body because they are sick in mind.

There is a famous old proverb which says a healthy mind makes a healthy body; not the other way around. That is why Sahaj Marg brand of Raja Yoga uses your mind to train your mind and through that, to enter into your heart, to see what is there, remove all the rubbish that is cluttering it, fill it with divine light and enjoy the bliss of a simple human and therefore divine life, because it is said that God created man in his own image – but not the men we see around us. We can become the man who God created in his own image, and that is the promise of Sahaj Marg. I hope you will all aspire to that and work to it, because nothing comes free in this world – *you* have to work and to achieve.

Thank you.

3

The Divine Within

I think first of all I would like to thank my brother and sister – Dr. Lalbhai family, who have made this possible for us, because none of you have made a mention. Babuji Maharaj used to say – I make this mention not to flatter them or thank them really but because I should not come under the category of those who have committed the sin of ingratitude. Babuji Maharaj said, "In Sahaj Marg there is only one sin: the sin of ingratitude." For what we have received, we are grateful. May my brother Sanjay-*bhai*, may my sister Jayshree-*behen*, may they be the *paatras* [recipients] of my Master's grace, and may they shine in His glory.

Sister Ranjana sang one of the Meera *bhajans* [devotional songs] where it is said, "*Path ke kaante phool ban jaate hein*. [Thorns on the path become flowers]." We can experience this only when we walk. If you are afraid of thorns and you stay at home, you are never going to know what a thorn is, and then you are afraid of something which you don't know anything about. That is called by various names in psychology, including neurological diseases. Like people who

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27 January 2002, Ahmedabad, India

are afraid on the fourteenth floor of a bungalow or a *makaan* [house], they are afraid of snakes. I know some old ladies who, before going to bed, look behind every door, under the *almirah* [cupboard], under the bed for snakes, for scorpions. And when you tell them it is not there, they say, "Yes, I know it is not there but what is the harm in looking and making sure it is not there?"

I am not saying this to belittle people who are afraid, but to correct a certain attitude that, when we are looking for something which doesn't exist, to prove that it doesn't exist, why don't we look for something which we know exists, and prove that it exists? We know that God exists, but we don't look for Him. We say, "*Nahin, nahin,* [No, no,] where to find God? *Voh to Kashi mein milte hein. Teertha yatra karni padti hai.* [He can be found in Kashi. A pilgrimage needs to be undertaken.] I have to go here. I have to go there." And we behave in such a way that God is never where I am, but He is somewhere else. I mean it is a very strange thing that religion speaks.

Religion has been dinning into the ears, especially in the Hindu religion, the Sanatana Dharma, that God is inside you, and we are spending hundreds of years in a so called search for God. We go to *mandirs* [temples]; we go to *masjids* [mosques]; we go to *gurudwaras* [Sikh places of worship]; we go to *girijas* [churches]. We go to *teerthas* [pilgrimages], we do *dubki* [take a ceremonial dip in the river]; we do all sorts of funny things. We make the Brahmin priests rich. We become poorer and poorer because every time you step out of the place where you are to look for God, you are insulting Him. You are denying Him. Peter denied only thrice. Jesus foretold, you see, that, "Before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." And it is said that Peter became mad subsequently, because he did deny Christ. But we are denying our God every moment of the time!

We have had great stories like the Prahlada Charitra where Prahlada's father, the great man, the great emperor, the great *asura* [demon] denied God. He said, "I am God!" He did not say God is in me. Now look at this difference – it is very important: I can never be God but God is always in me. This difference that poor fellow Hiranyakashipu [Prahlada's father], he did not understand. And in his arrogance, in his pride he said, "Where is God?" He tortured his own son. He tried to get him killed, and finally, out of total anger he said, "Is that fellow in this pillar?" Prahlada said, yes. And he kicked it, you see, and God came, and that was the end of Hiranyakashipu. So you see this Sanatana Dharma of the Hindu which we flaunt, which we flourish, which we talk so much about, has lain dead in the land in which it was created. The *rishis* [ascetics] whom we honour by having their names appended to ourselves – Bhardawaj, Vishwamitra, Kashyapa, Kaushik; we only sing their praise without acknowledging the truth of their existence. In fact our lives are total lies. What our saints said, we don't want to listen to. "*Satyam vada.* [Speak the truth.]" "No, no, no. If I speak the truth, how can I do business? *Mushkil hai, Sahab.* [Sir, it is difficult.]" "If I tell the truth to my boss, how can I survive in my *daftar* [office]?" "If I give right reports to the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister, I will lose my job." So *asatyam vada* [speak untruths] has become our rule. *Adharmam chara* [live non-righteously] has become our way of life. And this is not peculiar to you or me; it is peculiar to the whole land. In fact it is peculiar to the whole world today. The whole world lives in *asatya* [untruth], in *adharma* [non-righteousness]. And yet there is an increasing need for spirituality.

People are at last beginning to realize that religion does not appear to deliver the goods, because the religious leaders – who should have had better sense and who should have guided us towards God – only wanted to take out what is in our pockets, keep us in ignorance, keep us in superstitious fear of God, so that they may prosper. A tactic which our governments have emulated with enormous success especially in India; where they keep the population ill-educated, underfed, poorly clothed, and who make our prejudices grow, caste prejudices grow. Every day new castes are being added to the, whatever it is they call that wonderful book, in which castes are then defined and declared – and these are our governments! So religion has betrayed us, governments have betrayed us, and in between we are stuck like rice between the two *chakkis* [grinding stones], two stones of a *chakki*, and we have been powdered to dust.

India is a land, above all, of prejudices fostered by religion, number one. "He is Hindu, he is Brahmin, he is Kayasth, he is Shudra. They should not intermarry. Purity of castes!" Not purity of the mind – purity of caste! A Brahmin can be a *chandala* [of low caste], he can be a *mleccha* [outcaste]. He can eat meat, he can get drunk, but he is Brahmin, so he cannot do anything wrong – like that famous dictum in England that 'the King can do no wrong.' Whatever he did is right because the king did it. So in India the Brahmin can do no wrong. Of course today the Kayastha has taken over, the mleccha has taken over, the Shudra has taken over. "We cannot do anything wrong." So today nobody does wrong. Everybody is right, and like the *bandar-log* [monkeys] in Kipling's wonderful story, "We all say so, so it must be true." All politicians say they are straight, they are honest. They give declarations of wealth and therefore they are honest. *Wah, wah, wah* [sarcastic applause], you see. "All businessmen are honest. They make only honest profit. We say so." Wah, wah, wah, again you see. Clap, clap, clap.

This has become too serious a matter for us to anymore entrust our lives, not only spiritual – I am talking about our life in its totality – either to the government or to religion. They are both betraying. They have both betrayed us for generations, and to look to either of them for our welfare, we are indulging in – worse than mythology, worse than fallacy – we are living in illusion. Why? Because we are the creators of our religion. Religion was not created by God; man created religion. God created man; man created religion, and we are sufferers. My grandfather or grandmother used to say that the moment you take something and start worshipping it, it has power over you. You buy a *murti* [idol] of Ganesha and keep it at home like a decoration, it is a decoration. But the day you start putting *aarthi* [performing ritual worship] and putting *teeka* [sacred mark] on its forehead and saying, "*Ganeshaaya namaha* [salutations to Lord Ganesha]", you are dead. That little bit of stone for which you paid eleven rupees is now your boss. Before you go out you will bow before it. "Lord, keep my house safe. I am going out. Let me not be robbed." You see, you have transferred your power! You have made that Ganesha important – an eleven rupee worth of stone or metal! So every time you worship an idol or every time you worship somebody in governments – "*Saheb, aap hi hamaare mai baap hein.* [Sir, you are my mother and father.]" (You hear this all the time in Uttar Pradesh) – you have transferred your power. And when you have transferred your power, you are powerless.

Our prejudices are so deep that we have been consistently electing stupid people, criminals into government positions, into our political life. Why? Because of prejudice. Muslims vote for Muslims, Kayasths vote for Kayasths, Patels vote for Patels, Biharis vote for Biharis. Nobody votes for the right man. In our marriages which are full of tragedies, untold, unsung, unhonoured, but slowly beginning to be written about – where people have had the guts to say that marriage is nothing but licensed, legal prostitution. Because money marries money, caste marries caste. The man and the woman are not married at all. They suffer for the sake of caste, for the sake of pride, for the sake of family. Long live love marriages – even if they break it doesn't matter. They are marriages of choice, they are marriages of love. They are experimental perhaps in nature, and like all experiments, some will succeed, some will fail. But at least *you* choose; not your families, not your *gotra* [lineage]. We are not cows and bulls to be bred for genetic lines. So when is India or the Indian going to shake off all these stupid nonsenses, these prejudices, these prides? You know that famous novel, *Pride and Prejudice*? They go together. Patel marrying Patel, Kayasth marrying Kayasth, Muslim marrying Muslim – there too Shias, Sunni; it is a big problem.

So you see, beware of two things: beware of government, beware of religion. If you ask me which the greater danger is, I would say religion is the greater danger, because, after all you can change governments but you cannot change gods. Can you change your God? "No, no, Sir. My *kula devata* [family deity] is Shiva." Wonderful! Be destroyed, I say. Shiva is your guru! My God, what ignorance we have manifested in our lives! It is not for nothing that my Revered Master Babuji Maharaj said these gods are functionaries of nature. They are no more than constables of the crossroads, stopping traffic and guiding it. But our constables don't even do that. They don't even guide traffic. They are smoking or talking or taking a *chota* [small] bribe from somebody and the traffic is managing itself.

In India today everything manages itself. *Sarkar* [The government] does not govern. They are busy keeping their positions. IAS [Indian Administrative Service] man does not want to be transferred. Gujarati IAS [officer] does not want to go to Bihar. Bihari IAS [officer] does not want to go to Bengal. Politicians are busy holding onto their positions, thinking of the next election. They do nothing for us in this election. They have got elected, they are holding positions of power, but four years is too small for them to do something! "No, no, Sir. In my next term I will do something good for you." "What will you do?" "I will make a road for you; bring water supply; one bulb in every *jhopdi* [hut] in India." *Tamasha!* [A mockery!] We people are fools to be guided by these fellows, and we listen to them, and when they come to our village and put one bulb and one television set in a community centre in the village, *hahakar* [uproar]! It is published in the newspapers in multiple languages. All that he is doing is for himself; nothing is done for you – remember that. Brother Sinha's story about the man with eyes who became blind in a society of blind people... We are like that. We go into a corrupt society, we become corrupt. What can we do? Because they start working on us. "*Na, na*, Saheb. *Kem chaale? Beti ne to appavu pade ne. Su karvano*? [What can we do? We have to give to our daughter. What to do?] We want to tell the truth. You are not the first man to tell us. Gandhiji was also telling us." "Gandhiji was also telling you to tell the truth?" "Yes, Sir. This is the great land of Mahatma Gandhi. *Tamne khabar nathi?* [Do you not know?]" "Why don't you tell the truth?" "*Na, na*, Saheb. Those were different times."

No, no, not at all! Gandhiji was kicked. He was put in jail. He was beaten with *dandas* [sticks]. You only remember his Dandi March. You don't remember the danda march when the British police beat him. That's because that is not palatable. You don't want to be a Gandhi who is beaten by dandas by the police and put in jail. You want his name. You want to profit by his name. You want to say *mahaan* [great] Gujarat. It is mahaan Gujarat because Gandhiji was here. Ahmedabad is great because Gujarat Vidyapeeth [Gujarat University] which Morarjibhai founded is here, ashram is here, ashram road is there, so we are great, you see.

What are you? It is time our people should ask themselves, "What am I doing here?" We are afraid. We are afraid that if we don't tell lies, we cannot make a decent income. Therefore your family will die, you will die, everybody will die. I say, die – it does not matter. He who would not die for what he cherishes and what he upholds as the values of life is unfit to live. There would have been no Christianity if Christ had not been crucified. Imagine a tame Christ who was not crucified, who accepted that he had said things which he should not have said in the Jewish temple; who said, "Yes, please forgive me. I should not have overturned the moneychangers' table. I should not have liberated the pigeons that were waiting to be sacrificed." What would there be? There would be no Christianity. Would Gandhi have been great had he not suffered, had he not gone to jail, had he not fasted again and again, and had he not been ultimately assassinated? There would be no Gandhi, no Mahatma Gandhi Road, and no Gandhi Nagar.

All great things are founded on the sacrifices of individuals. Not ordinary sacrifice. "*Nahin, nahin,* Paryushan [a Jain festival]." I was once with a Jain family and they were eating a nice meal at eight o' clock in the evening when I visited them. It was a feast. And he was a business associate in my former days. I said, "What is this? Why you are...?" "*Yeh* Paryushan." I said, "Paryushan? What is that?" "Fasting," he said. "This is fasting? Table food?" "*Haan.* [Yes.] From *suryoday* [sunrise] to suryoday, we have to fast." *Rasagulla, gulab jamun* [sweets]! So, this is how we cheat gods because gods can see only in the daytime! [Laughter] Because in the dark we cannot see, our gods also cannot see. You know in one of the talks somewhere I said, when in a bedroom, if people are doing something they shouldn't do, if there is a picture of god, they change it; they turn it towards the wall. Because those are the eyes and ears of God, and you turn it the other way, He is looking the other way! This is Hindu society at its best, as believers in God! "Because we know, we believe in God." "*Thame kem khabar lage?* [How do you know?]" "No, no, I have turned the picture around. Suppose I did not believe in God, why should I turn the picture towards the wall? *Bolo, Sahib.* [Tell me, Sir.]" So I am a believer in God because, knowing I am doing something wrong, I have turned the picture the other way. Therefore I am a believer in God. *Sabaash!* [Well done!] Subashbhai, sabaash!

So you see at what levels we are believers in God. We are always talking, "I am God loving, Sir. I fear God." How can you be fearing God and also loving God? It's not possible. Christianity says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." Now all this talk of *bhavsagar paar karo* [crossing the ocean of life], it is wonderful music. Ranjana is a *koel* [nightingale]. I have given her the title of 'Koel of Sahaj Marg'. But if there is love and if on the other side of the river or *sagar* [ocean] your beloved is waiting, will you not just jump in and swim? There's this story of this fellow who became a saint, who for the love of a girl went in a storm, crossed a river, climbed up a rope which she had left hanging and went into his lover's bedroom. She said, "How did you come in this storm?" He said, "I thought only of you." "How did you cross this raging inferno of a river? It is in spate." He said, "No, no, there was a log of wood and I managed to hang on to it and cross." "And how did you come to my bedroom?" "You had let down a rope." And then they saw that the log of wood that he had caught on was a *laash* (a corpse), and the rope that he thought his beloved had left for him was a snake. His love made a corpse into a log of wood and a python into a rope, and he was successful in his pursuit of his love. And we, the so called lovers of God – where there is a log of wood, we see a corpse; where there is a rope, we see a snake, and where there are flowers, we say *kaanta* [thorn] on the *path.* And then we are able to sing, "*Path ke kante phool ban jayenge.*" [The thorns on the path will turn into flowers]. *Path ke kante phool nahi bante hein – mein* fool *banta hoon,* F-O-O-L. [The thorns on the path do not become flowers; I become a fool.]

Babuji Maharaj said, one who is afraid of the journey, let him not leave his house. That Jagjit Singh also has said, you see: *itne darte hain to ghar se kyun nikalte hein baahar* [If you are so afraid, then why do you step out of your home]? All this I am saying, not to belittle human beings, not to belittle my brothers and sisters of the Hindu community or any community in this world, because as a human being, I embrace all humanity. I know no distinctions of caste, religion, colour, creed, anything. When are you going to understand the need for this? When are you going to be people born in Gujarat but not Gujaratis, born to Patels but not a Patel yourself. I was very happy this morning when Babuji's grandson who is my family, when Suresh announced, "Vineet Kumar Saxena," he said, "No, no Saxena. Vineet Kumar Chandra." Gone is this 'Saxena'. What is this 'Saxena'? Babuji Maharaj was not Saxena. He was also a Saxena by birth. He was a Kayasth. But he did not say, Ram Chandra Saxena. "Ram Chandra."

We should have the *courage* to throw off all that is unnecessary. When it is cold, you put on a jacket. When it is warm, you throw it out. Isn't it? At the time of Indira Gandhi in that famous episode – what was it called? – Operation Blue Star, hundreds and thousands of Sikhs cut off their hair. What happened to their wonderful religion? Did Guru Gobind Singh immediately condemn them to hell? So when it is convenient to you, and you have to do it, you do it.

No *kaccha* [undergarment], no *kirpan* [dagger], no *kesha* [unshorn hair], no *kada* [steel bracelet], no *kangi* [comb]. Money does strange things, you see. There is this story of a *sardar* [a Sikh] who went to the famous temple in Amritsar, and he had forgotten the kangi. So he went into a shop; they were selling kangis. He said, "*Kangi do, bhai, ek.* [Give me a comb]." He said, "You want the one for four *annas* or eight annas?" He said, "*Fark kya hai*? [What is the difference?]" He said, "*Attani vaale mein ek chota sa kirpan bhi laga hua hai.*" [The one for eight annas has a small dagger attached.]" He said, *kano-kano se bola* [he whispered in his ear], "*Ek kaccha bhi lagaoge? Ek rupya le lo.* [Could you please give me one with an attached undergarment? Take a rupee instead.]" We are buying from religion, facilities. Inside nobody will see. *Aap kaccha pehne ya na pehne, kisko pataa hai*? Isn't it? [Who knows if you are wearing the undergarment or not?] But in this hypocrisy we still indulge. *Kangi bhool gaye. Chavanni kangi mein keval kangi hai. Attani kangi mein ek chota sa kirpan model bhi ghusa hua hai. Voh kucch pehen-na bhool gaya. "Ek kaccha bhi laga do, ek rupya le lo," voh kehta hai.* [He has forgotten the comb. The four annas comb is only the comb. The eight annas one has a dagger attached. He has forgotten to wear the undergarment. "You give me one with an attached undergarment, and take one rupee," he says.]

So you see, religion leads us towards more and more corruption, more and more lies. In the *sannidhaan* [presence] of God himself, we are prepared to tell lies. Politics has made us even bigger liars. We are tax evaders. We have to evade tax because we say, "What can we do? I earn and he takes. And they don't spend the money. They take from me for social welfare which they claim they are going to do, so why should I give them the money that I earn?" Looks very legitimate; looks like a very honourable argument. So we come to this Scylla and Charybdis of government and religion, between which we have to navigate.

The only way is spirituality. Ignore this, ignore that. Know your way towards God, *bhavsaagar* [ocean of life] or no bhavsaagar, mountains or no mountains. Your emblem shows an enormous mountain pierced by the Sahaj Marg path. You have to go through that. There is no way out. It is suffering if you think it is suffering. If your love carries you and you can make a *laash* [corpse] into a log of wood and a python into a rope, and go to your lover, where are the crocodiles, and where are the pythons? They don't exist, except in your mind. If you have the love that surpasses all loves, and if that love brings upon you the need to go to your beloved post-haste, there are no dangers on the way. There is no *naav* [boat], there is no *naavika* [boatsman] there is no *naiyya paar kar de* [taking the boat across]. There is only me and Him.

I pray that it will be so with all of you, that our ashrams will become sorts of places from where we can evolve into that attitude, into that quest, and to the fulfilment of that quest.

Thank you.

4

Sahaj Marg – The Way Of Love

Respected elders, Sarnadji, Dinesh Babu, my youngest brother Sarvesh, my dear sisters and brothers of our great family of Sahaj Marg:

Of course we all know we are gathered here to celebrate the birthday of the greatest saint that nature and its bounty has bequeathed to us, *param pujya* [most revered] Lalaji Maharaj, our *adi-guru* [first guru]. Normally in India celebration means enjoyment – good food, sweets, *hil-mil* [getting together]. But my Master Babuji Maharaj, whose picture you see there, the representative of my adi-guru Maharaj Lalaji Saheb, he always emphasized that the lives of great saints are remembered on their birth anniversaries, of course for celebration, because it is a great event that they descended on earth to place before humanity forgotten values of a real human life; to set before humanity a forgotten spiritual goal; to offer to humanity a *paddhati* – a spiritual way of life which we should all practice. And to offer a helping hand, their own, as our *marga darshis* – one who can

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Basant Panchami Celebration, 2 February 2002, Mumbai, India show us the way; not merely show, but hold our hand in their hand and guide us, and take us up to the goal personally. To the extent that Babuji Maharaj said there are very difficult regions in spiritual progress which human beings cannot ordinarily traverse, where the guru takes the disciple into himself like a kangaroo taking its baby in its pouch and crossing those places – difficult places, perhaps dangerous places, perhaps impossible to cross by human endeavour.

So these are the values that we must cherish, we must adopt, we must practice, we must live by, and when we celebrate the life of these great saints, Lalaji Maharaj, Babuji Maharaj (which will come next on the 30th of April), we must of course celebrate, because as I said, nature's gifts must be celebrated. Celebration means to cherish, to honour, to obey – the three values applied in marriage also – to love, to cherish, to honour, to obey. Otherwise if we just distribute *kheer* [a sweet] and eat prasad, we may put on a little weight – nothing more.

I had a recent vision in Satkhol. I think it was last Basant Panchami when, on the day we dedicated the ashram to my Revered Master Babuji Maharaj, Babuji said, "It is good we are here to celebrate the life of my divine Master. This has to be celebrated again and again." Not to honour his memory, because he doesn't need our honour; not to praise him because his greatness does not depend on our praise; not to flatter him because they are above flattery, and flattery is a lie always. Not even to worship, because they are above worship. Worship is for mere gods and goddesses. Saints are never worshipped. Saints are to be obeyed; saints are to be loved; saints are to be followed. Their lives are lives of sacrifice. They are human beings who lived a perfect human life. We call them divine because Babuji Maharaj said, a perfect human being *is* divine, whereas the Divine is not a perfect human being; in fact in divinity there is no perfection. Divinity being quality-less, it cannot be perfect, it cannot be imperfect. It cannot be generous, it cannot be ungenerous. It cannot be kind, it cannot be cruel. Divinity is beyond these opposites – these *dvandvas*.

I often thought that God comes down to earth as a guru because there in His divine state, He is a heartless Being, He is a mindless Being – no compassion, no love. Some religions say God is love, some say God is mercy, some say He is benevolence. My Master said, He is nothing, and that is the truth of the matter. He is nothing; all that He can do to help us is to bring Himself down here, take a heart and bring a mind along with Him, and say, "I have to help these people who are my creation, who have forgotten me in their lust for material life, material pleasures, material welfare; who have become more and more avaricious, more and more greedy, more and more grasping. And they tend to forget me more and more." So that as Moses said of the world, "The God in heaven is forgotten and is established on earth in the form of stone and metal idols."

"As you worship, so you become," said a great saint of the Christian tradition. If you worship stone, you shall become stone. We are not here to worship; we are here to love. Sahaj Marg is above all, *par excellence,* a way of love. Babuji Maharaj, my revered Master said, Lord Krishna is the greatest avatar because he brought to us human beings the idea of love for God. God is to be loved; God is not to be feared. Among Hindus we have this famous phrase, "He is God-fearing." Why should we be God-fearing? I mean, are you afraid of your father? Yes, if you do wrong, if you are smoking, drinking, hiding behind the garage having a love affair, of course you are afraid of your father. But you don't have to be afraid if you say, "Well, it is finished. Thus far and no further." Babuji Maharaj always said, "True repentance is in resolving not to do it again" – whatever it may have been. We don't have to beat our breast and grovel before him, biting the dust of the feet and so on and so forth as embodied in the various religious and scriptural traditions. There is no need to grovel before one's father. One goes and says, "Dad, this I was. Now I want to become like you."

Sahaj Marg says, "Thou art the real goal of human life, O Master." If I may be bold enough to say so, there is no God that we worship in Sahaj Marg. There is no worship at all, and not of God at all. We follow the greatest saintly being on earth, accept his teaching, accept his benevolent assistance, and resolve to follow his way of life the way he lived it, his simplicity, his unassuming nature, his always humble stance, his undemandingness and his eternal dedication to service. It is service that must distinguish a master from the rest of the people. A master is not one who commands; a master is one who serves. This was our ancient tradition in India, long forgotten. Today masters say, "Serve me, give me, worship me, praise me, honour me. Dress me in silks. Give me in cheque or in black, it doesn't matter, but give me. "*Do, do, do* [give, give, give]" – nothing else. But a spiritual master must serve, and he is called a master not because he is master of others, but because through ardent love of his master, through dedicated practice of the spiritual way, through an inner resolve to make himself as his guru, he has mastered himself.

So a master in spirituality is only a master of himself, of nothing else. He is a servant of humanity. "Service without servility," said my master. We serve but we are nobody's servants, because the servant is paid, we don't get paid. Dinesh Babu very humbly said that as an abhyasi of Sahaj Marg ("Sahaj Marg abhyasi *hone ke naate, is haisiat se...*") – I am very proud that I have a younger brother who is no less a person than Lalaji's grandson himself, who is able to manifest this humility before us, because Lalaji Maharaj according to my Master was the epitome of a simple life, nobly lived. Sarvesh on this side is my youngest brother, the youngest son of my Master. He too is a preceptor and he is taking charge and holding charge of our Shahjahanpur centre. One, the *janmasthaan* [birthplace] of Lalaji Maharaj, where Lalaji Maharaj lived all his life, where his samadhi exists for us, and the other, the janmasthaan of Babuji Maharaj, where Babuji Maharaj built his memorial for Lalaji Maharaj – his Taj Mahal should I say – because the

Shahjahanpur ashram is an expression of my Master's immense oceanic love for his Master.

Anybody who has read *Truth Eternal* and who has read the sixty-four or so pages of the introduction that Babuji Maharaj has written, cannot read any better love letter, or love poem or a love prose than what Babuji wrote for his Master. It is human beings who think love can exist only between the two different sexes. Babuji's introduction to *Truth Eternal* (at that time it was the only work of Lalaji Maharaj which was available to Shri Ram Chandra Mission) is an undying eternal flame of that love for the Master. Love never dies. Persons may die, the spirit never dies. The soul never dies. Soul is eternal. Love is eternal because quality of soul is love. Love is soul. God is love. Love is God.

When we celebrate and when we remember our Master, we do so with the sole purpose of remembering them: how they lived, how they walked on this earth, how they served, how Babuji Maharaj never even said, "I am thirsty. Give me a glass of water." If there was a sensitive abhyasi around, he felt Babuji's thirst and gave him water. Babuji never asked. He never said, "*Pyaas lagi hai. Paani pilao mujhe.* [I am thirsty. Bring me some water.]" Do we want to aspire to such a life? Are we just here, as I said, to buy souvenirs, to eat *kheer* [sweets], to praise each other and say, "Oh, wonderful! We are all abhyasis," like the monkeys of Kipling – "We are all monkeys, we are all great. We say so, so it must be true." There is no greatness in Sahaj Marg. There is only *simplicity*. Babuji Maharaj said again and again, a true abhyasi of Sahaj Marg will attract others. People will say, "Who is this person sitting here? What is he doing that we see something in him which we don't see in other human beings?"

An abhyasi of Sahaj Marg need not have to say, "I am a Sahaj Marg abhyasi." I go a step further and say, a member of their families should not have to say, "I am Lalaji's grandson," or "I am Babuji's son." If they have to say it, I think it is shaming their progenitors. People should say, "Who is this man sitting here? I see a lustre shining in his face. Such humility, such service-mindedness, such nobility, dedication – he *must* be somebody from this family!" Then they must humbly come and say, "*Saheb, aap ki tareef...?* [Sir, may I know who you are...?]" and then Dinesh Babu must very humbly say, "*Mein to keval ek ansh hoon Lalaji Maharaj ka.* [I am only a small part of Lalaji's family.]" Only! That is the way noble tradition must continue into the future; not by self-aggrandisement, not by demanding recognition.

I am reminded of a great story in the Mahabharat. Drona, the great Dronacharya, was a Brahmin and yet a Kshatriya (warrior). His son Ashvatthama was jealous of Arjuna the greatest – *sarvashresth dhanurdhar* [greatest archer] they say again and again. And he is having a *vaad-vivaad* [debate] with his father Dronacharya. Dronacharya says, "My son, you *are* my son. This cannot be doubted; this cannot be questioned. In the *aangan* [courtyard] in my house, you are *pratham* [first]. Outside, you are one among my disciples." It is very difficult to accept. Ashvatthama rebels. Dronacharya says, "Forgive me, you are my son. In the aangan there is nobody above you. Outside, I repeat, Arjuna is my number one." This story must be emulated by all.

We are not children of great masters; we are only disciples of great masters. Children are born to every living form on earth. We cannot derive greatness from the fact that we are children of parents. So are calves, so are puppies, so are lion cubs, so are chicken. What is our greatness? If I am claiming the greatness of my grandfather or my father, I must be as great as they were.

I beg to be excused if I am transgressing into values and stressing values which I hope will prevail. Because the Sahaj Marg tradition is too sacred, is too humble a system even to propagate itself by advertisement. We do not advertise. We do not advertise for the simple reason that we don't charge any fees for initiation or for membership. Where no money is involved, no advertisement is necessary. This is a sad commentary in a world where advertisement budgets are swelling in corporate values because it is pre-tax expenditure, and so it does not matter whether you spend twenty crores or forty crores. Who cares? And lies can be told through advertising because anything in print is holy. I mean *ipso facto* we assume that something which is printed cannot be a lie. I think it was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who said in one of his famous speeches, "Everything in Sanskrit is not necessarily sacred."

So, we abhyasis have a very great responsibility. When we become an abhyasi of Sahaj Marg, we accept responsibility to lead our lives in such a way that we do not bring any *kalank* – any stain upon the names of our great Masters, Lalaji Maharaj and Babuji Maharaj. I will go a step further and say, their family members have even a greater responsibility, because the world expects from them much more than they expect from mere abhyasis like us. We are after all mere abhyasis. So, dear brothers and sisters, I remind you that it is not a privilege to be born into such families. It is a great tragedy if you cannot live up to those values, and it is the noblest life on earth if you can live by them, and become as they have become.

Today my prayer to my great Master adi-guru param pujya Lalaji Maharaj Saheb and to my divine Master Babuji Maharaj is this: May He endow us all, with humility to live as they lived. May they give us the courage to follow the path relentlessly, without looking to the left or right, without needing blinkers like horses of yore. May they give us the strength to tread the path until we reach the goal. And may my hands ever be free of all bondages, so that my hands shall never leave His.

Thank you.

5

Follow the Heart

We have been having repeat programs on Kabir. We had one in Panvel, we had one here, and then of course, we had one during the centenary celebration of Babuji Maharaj in 1999, in Manapakkam by a professional mono-actor which took nearly two-and-a-half hours. And after seeing all these and after studying the life of great saints, of avatars, repeatedly one question comes from abhyasis. Throughout the history of a country, of our country for instance, people come, who come to reform by bringing great reformation, small reformation, may be local, may be global and it lasts for some time and it fades away. Even Krishna in his avatar, or I should say, God in his supposed avatar as Krishna, says that he has to come again and again – "*Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavati.* [Whenever dharma is threatened, I arrive.]"

Now the question always asked is, why? Why can't one super saint come, create a wonderful world, and that wonderful world go on getting better and better, and not worse and worse as it is always done? We have the tradition of the *yugas* [eons] in India, each yuga

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6 February 2002, Pune, India

grosser than the previous one, until we come to our own Kali Yuga where, not only is it already awful, but our tradition says it will get worse and worse until the world is destroyed.

So when we look to these traditions and the fact of history and *chatur* [four] yugas, and God himself saying, "I have to come again and again," and then we have people saying, "Oh, where God fails, saints succeed." Somebody did say that in one of our talks in Ahmedabad, I think, I am not sure. But even that success, it doesn't last, you see. Then of course there are sanctimonious theories offered that a raw (*kachcha*) thing will ripen, and after ripening it will become progressively more and more decayed until it is useless – the cyclical nature of things. But, I suppose the fruit doesn't like it. No fruits like to decay; nor does one who has to eat it, like it. So we human beings, find ourselves in a peculiar situation of having a historical fact, traditional beliefs, and the actualities of life, where we see in the recent history of India, great reformers who have come and gone; reformations supposed to have been affected, and yet the world getting progressively darker, progressively more decadent, progressively more violent, more corrupt, more everything else.

So we always think you see, "What the hell is going on?" because it is only hell that is going on. My intention is not to be profane in speech, but when we ask, what the hell is going on, it is hell that is going on and on, becoming more and more hellish; and heaven seems to be more and more of a receding dream in which less and less people believe. And then we have jokes like those of Oscar Wilde, where he would prefer hell because that is where most of his friends are! What is there in heaven to aspire to? And then comes my own Master to say that reality is but a dreary wasteland of a desert, where there is no charm, where there is nothing in fact. Because he, in his personal life when he reached the culmination of his spiritual practice, his spiritual journey, his spiritual adventure, and reached the goal as it is called, his Master Lalaji Maharaj congratulated him. He said, "I congratulate you, for today you have achieved *that* for which we have been working together." So Babuji Maharaj said, "Is this all for which I have struggled all my life, and Your Honour too has been doing something?" You see, even then the wording – "for which I have struggled all my life, and Your Honour has of course been helping me." Lalaji Maharaj said, "Well, if you don't value it, I can always take away this condition from you." Then Babuji said, "My Lord! If you do that, I will die." So Lalaji said, 'It is *that* condition, having which you have nothing but without which you cannot live; without which you cannot exist."

So you see, the whole thing is in sort of a, well, I wouldn't like to call it a mess [chuckles], but to most people it would appear like a mess. Human life seems to be life full of aspirations which, when achieved, turn, as the Bible says, into dust and ashes. Common ones like success. "Every success is a failure," my Master said. We all know it. You become something from something. You don't find that ecstasy, and that glory, and that self-satisfaction that you expected. You wait for an increment. Instead of twenty-five rupees you get a hundred rupees. Everybody thumps you on the back, congratulates you, but in half-an-hour you wonder why they didn't give you two hundred. And by the evening you are waiting to see what they are going to do next year.

You get married and you expect – you have all these romantic dreams, what the French have a song, *La Vie en Rose* – life painted like a rose flower, gilding the lily. And then like in drunkenness, marriage too results in a syndrome, which you can call nothing but the morning after the night before, and another bubble is pricked. And then you slip back into a sort of mundane lethargy; then you say, "Well, one more failure." One more dream which has resulted in another pricked bubble, of emptiness, of nothing.

So you see every institution – the student, class after class, struggling away, pestered at home, pushed at home. Fanatically ambitious fathers pushing their children almost to the limits of, shall we say, insanity. Many children have fallen prey to this and have lost their sanity, and have gone out of the mainstream of lives. They just couldn't take it. And it doesn't end with one exam. You have the unit examination, you have the weekly test, you have the quarterly [examination], you have the half-yearly, I don't know, and the annual. And there is a moment of euphoria when your papers are done and you think, "Now I have two months' holiday before the next class." And then you are on tenterhooks waiting for your mark sheet, for your promotion. You are promoted; what happens? All over again you start. New series of unit tests, new quarterly [examinations], new half-yearly [examinations], more pressure.

So many children have been coming to me these past ten days. "Board exam, board exam, board exam" – and they are all tensed. And I don't bless them – I mean in my heart I do. Because, here again there is a problem. If you bless them, they think automatically they'll do well. So I take my walking stick, brandish it menacingly, and say "You are an abhyasi. If you don't do properly you'll feel this." That seems to give them more satisfaction than an empty blessing in which nobody believes. At least here with the walking stick, they have something to look forward to. Why? Because there is a secret: When you bless and they are successful, they don't want to attribute success to a blessing. They want success for themselves. Same thing in marriage, you see. They want success for themselves. Success, success and success! And every success is a possible failure waiting to succeed it.

So when we think of these holy institutions, spiritual organizations, avatars, with their own paraphernalia of what not – arms and ammunition, followers, and the stories of all the *rishis* [ascetics] and liberated souls coming back with the Lord every time He comes, because they cannot be lonely up there. *Dwarpalas* [gatekeepers] coming together with the Lord. You know that famous story, that every time the Lord descends as an avatar, his dwarpalas come. Ravana and Kumbhakarna, Kamsa and Shishupala were His dwarpalas. They could not stay away from Him. So they said, "Lord, how can we stay when you have gone down to *bhooloka* or *mrityuloka* [earth]?" as they call it. He said, "Well," he smiles – always this Lord is a mischievous blighter; He likes to tease us. And the Lord says, "You can come down to earth with me, and spend ten *janmas* [lives] as my *bhaktas* [devotees] or three janmas as my *virodhi* [enemy]." They said, "Lord, how can we be separate from you for ten janmas? Let it be; we will be your enemies for three janmas." So Kamsa and Shishupala, Ravana and Kumbhakarna and what not, you see. It goes on and on. And then the tradition comes, that when you hate the Lord with implacable hatred, it results in some form of constant remembrance which is much praised in Sahaj Marg; and that constant remembrance is what succeeds. Not your hatred. So even though you die at the hands of the Lord, the death is total, it is final. What Plato calls in one of his dialogues, a long death; because there is no return from that death. "*Yad gatvaa na nivartante, tad dhaama paramam mama.* [Having reached my Ultimate abode, people do not come back.]"

So this spiritual life is so much a jumble of opposing values, opposing beliefs, *apparently* opposed, that to love, you must hate; that to be disciplined there must be a little indiscipline; unless you have felt the cold you cannot feel the warmth. We heard it in some *bhajan* [devotional song] I think in Panvel again, extolling the opposites of existence that if you have not been drunk you cannot be sober, and you do not know the value of sobriety. And more and more increasingly, [there is] the idea that children must experience the world for themselves and not depend on the experience of their parents and progenitors, because after all experience must be personal. So we must get drunk, we must have venereal diseases, we must have dementia praecox, because then it is our own experience, you see!

Now I was thinking after last night's Kabir play, why in Sahaj Marg Babuji Maharaj said there are three 'M's. Babuji said there are only three things in this world you can call yours: Master, Mission, method. I call them the 3Ms after that famous company in America, 3M. You know why? Why did he say this? Because when you see in life itself, I would translate Master into heart, Mission into the body, and method to life. Now, body without life is no use. It's a corpse, isn't it? So body and life come together with a heart inside. It's not the head which is so important. The head is after all an instrument of guidance; nothing more than that. It cannot tell you how to live, what are the true values of life that you cherish. Is it the intellect to which you must give predominance and total authority over your life? Then it is like a computer running society.

There are many science fiction stories where eventually there will be a super computer. In one story it is the whole world linked by a computer, and the computer is the president of the world. And the next president is chosen by the computer. It takes all the parameters of the individual lives of all the citizens and sort of spits out one name, and he is the next president. Then there are stories of the whole galaxy being linked together by a super computer, and the story goes that the then president of the galaxy was asked to start it and to ask one question. So he pressed the button, the computer turned on, and he typed out a question, "Who are you?" And the answer came, "I am God."

So you see, when you depend too much on your intellect and intellectual processes, and depend on them saying that they are rational, the heart can make mistakes. There are abhyasis who think they've made a mistake in joining Sahaj Marg. They like the Mission, they like the method, but they don't like the Master. Some of them hate him. There are others who like the Master and the method but not the Mission. They say, "Too much organization. Why ashrams? Why books? After all, Vishwamitra didn't have an ashram. He sat under a tree and preached." And our cinemas add fuel to this sort of fanciful fire, that you don't need an institution. You can sit where you are, under a nice *kadamba* tree or a *peepal* tree and preach. After all Buddha did it. No? And then we come to this unfortunate fact that where Buddha lived, where Christ lived, where other great saints lived, who left only an institution and not the heart, they became religions.

I dare venture to say that if Rama had left a successor, a spiritual successor, had Krishna left a successor, there would be no Hinduism. If Buddha had left a successor, there would be no Buddhism.

There would have been a living spiritual tradition. So you see, without the heart, of course you have the body and life. And if you don't mind my using a very unsavoury reference, it is prostitution. Where a man goes for a body which is living and does not want the heart which is inside, pulsing away, seeking love, looking for love, wanting to give love, yearning for love; what else do you call it but prostitution? So where the head is extolled, depended upon, given primacy, supremacy, in some way we are deviating from let us say the holy ideals of matrimony to a flagrant violation of matrimonial ethics, principles, morality into some sort of a prostitutional state.

I am too tired of hearing lectures where they say, without Master there is no Mission, there is no method. Of course, there is no Mission, no method. If Lalaji had not been there, there would be no Sahaj Marg. Had he died without leaving a successor, it would have been death, not *mahasamadhi* [the final samadhi, when a saint renounces his body and returns to the brighter world]. And probably we would have had temples of Lalaji Maharaj, *archanas (pujas)* [ritualistic worship] and *ashtottara sahasranaamas* [1008 names in praise of God] – the whole thing very merry, very happy because you don't have to answer to a living guru. You don't have to love a living person. You don't have to put up with his foibles, with his changing moods, with his apparent idiosyncrasies, with the way he talks: sometimes arrogant, sometimes kind, sometimes proud, sometimes humble, sometimes with a walking stick, sometimes wanting to hug you.

A human being is subject to judgment by others. And Christ said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." But we, as abhyasis, don't want to be judged. "Who are you to judge?" they say. "You are here to help me. You are here to help me unconditionally. You are here to help me whether I deserve to be helped or not." Look at that, you see.

One abhyasi went to the extent of saying, "If your wonderful Master is all that wonderful and great, why the hell does he not liberate me without putting me through this rigmarole of meditation and cleaning and prayer and all this rubbish?" I sympathized with him because, in my own shall I say beginning of spiritual life, I too have felt occasionally, "Why all this rigmarole?" And especially when Babuji says, "Meditation alone does not confer any right upon you for any spiritual *haalat* or state," I said, "Then what does?" He said, "We meditate because we obey."

If you look into the ancient traditions of India, people have meditated or were supposed to have meditated for thousands of years. Meditation alone is not enough. Constant remembrance – then comes the great saying again by my great Master: Constant remembrance is but a process. It is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. *Viola!* What is that? It is to create love. Is that the end? Says the Master, "If your love is absolutely centred on that object of your love, your beloved, your Almighty God, your Master, your lover, you may accept him as anything you like. He can be your father, your mother, your beloved, but I prefer that you take him as your mother," says my

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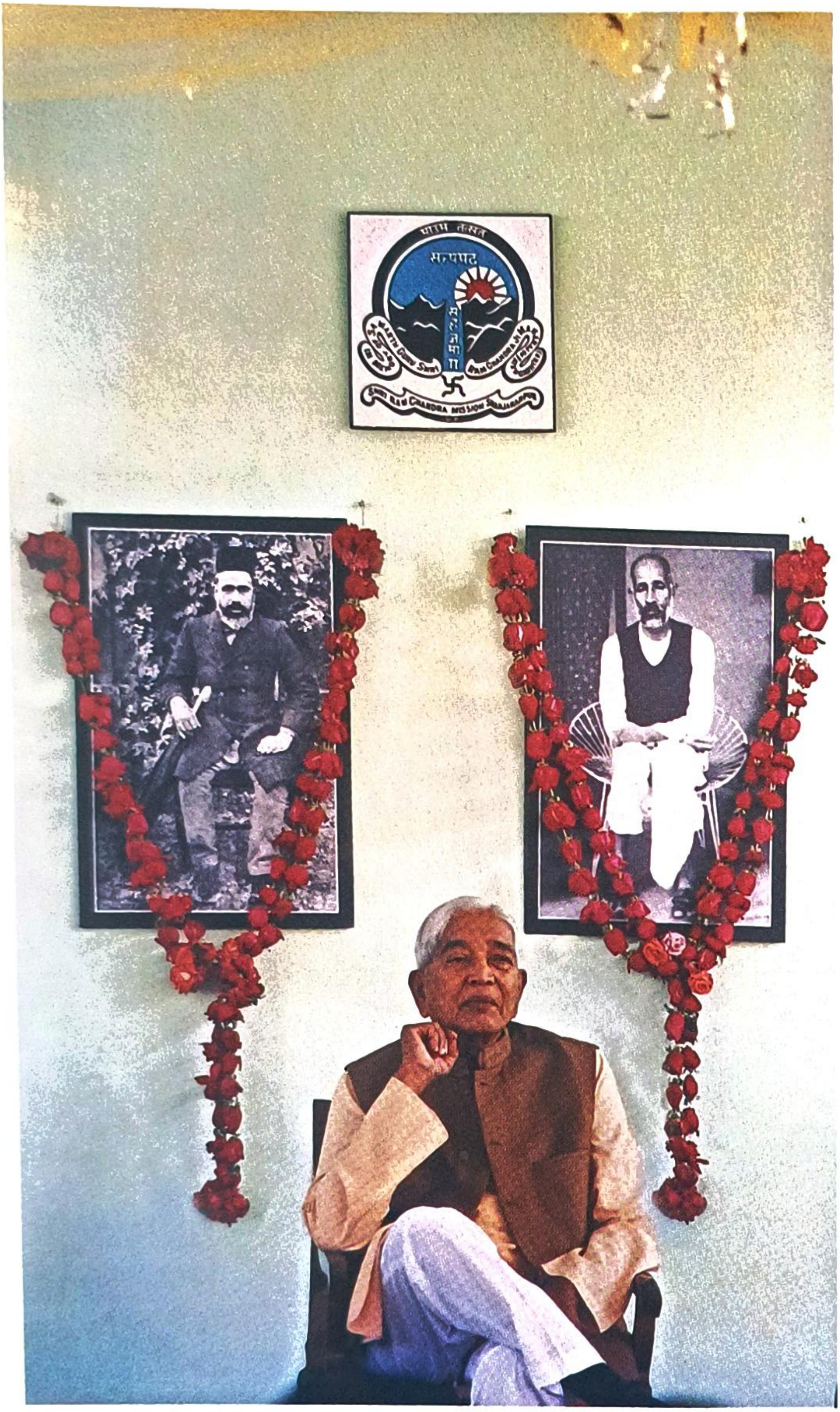
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Master. Then what happens? Then we come back. Then the mother has to look after the children. They can come back dirty, she must not chastise them. She must hug the dirty child and spoil her own sari, it doesn't matter. That is love.

So I daresay that abhyasis suffer from this whole bag of tricks put together into one great *ensemble,* as the French say, of expectations that a Master must be a mother. He must be a man, but he must be a mother. He must talk of discipline but never impose discipline. He can comment, that, "You are wonderful people. Your condition is good," especially when he is going to leave, because it is a parting gift. He must not hurt us because our hearts are so tender. You understand? So nowadays I don't give speeches for this single reason that every time you talk, you are bound to rub somebody's ego, because the whole thing is nothing but ego. "I am great. My Master may be greater, but he must not forget I am great. And if I am great, who the hell is he to criticize me? I am what I am. Accept me as I am and change me; let me not feel the effects of change. Let me suddenly find myself awakened into that glory-full (generally), after-life state which we call saintliness." I mean, it's a dream worth dreaming, but like all dreams if you are not careful, we are only going to wake up and find ourselves that we are worse than before.

So my friends – I don't want to call brothers and sisters because it is too hackneyed a phrase. I find less and less of brotherhood developing in the Mission, more and more of animosities, more and more of jealousies. "Why ashram in Panvel when Pune should have an ashram?" "Why Pune should have an ashram when Panvel is going to have an ashram?" "Why Mumbai has no ashram? Why in Panvel?" – So many problems. When I look at it from South India they are happy that in Maharashtra there are coming up two or three ashrams. But when you come into Maharashtra, there is this problem of why Panvel, why not Pune? Why not Ambavadi? Why not Wakdewadi? Why not Ratnagiri? Then Konkan – why not in Konkan one ashram? "What, Master? Don't you like Konkan?" Somebody asked me. *Arre*, what has liking and non-liking to do with it? Where there is need, we create. Ratnagiri mangoes are supposed to be the best. Wonderful, I love Ratnagiri – but not for itself; for its mangoes.

So the Master should love a place, a country, the world, for the abhyasis that you can create there – for their heart, not for their mind; minds can be bought. Today there are supercomputers, which a million geniuses could have put together, but they cannot emulate. We are able to create machines which perform better than us, faster than us, more profoundly, but then you look at the other side of the machine... I was astonished to read some years ago, probably a decade ago, that the then best computer took three-and-a-half years to generate the next prime number over the previous known prime number! And of course the next one may take fourteen years. The next one may take 275 years. Who knows, you see? So all that speed, all that processing capacity, all that genius of inventing a machine which can perform, I don't know with what lightning speed – so many nanoseconds, and yet we need so many years! And yet when you say in spirituality, to go from point A to point B takes forty-five years, they don't believe it. Here also we have a supercomputer here. I mean, assuming that you do have a supercomputer and not merely a computer. And even merely a computer is much better than this soft thing inside our skull. And then when you say the next point can take, forty-five into forty-five, which is 2250 odd, they say, "*Nahi, nahi, nakko.* [No, no, I don't want it.] I am happy, Sir."

So we are happy where we are. We don't want to change. The ego will not permit change, you see. Don't make the mistake of thinking that people are proud and they are sticking on to their image of themselves, whatever it may be. The ego makes you think like that. The ego makes you remain what you are. The ego makes you proud of your, shall we say, even success against your Master. "Oh, that fellow, you know, I told him off. He could not answer my question." Babuji Maharaj used to say, "Do you want your question answered or do you want your life to be moulded?" Those of you who are here to have your life moulded will suffer all supposed indignities at my hands. Those who only want to be successful will stick to their egos, and look for greater success, and become progressively more distant from the Master, more – I don't know, everything else that you can think of. So always remember, success can be failure if your success is only feeding your ego. Failure can be success, if it is your *soul* that you are looking after, which you want to nurture, which you want to liberate from this stupid body in which we are encased.

All good things must come to an end and all unsavoury and probably not so useful things like my visit must also come to an end. And of course, the worst thing like my speeches also must mercifully come to an end {laughs}. So with that benediction I will end my speech now and say goodbye to all of you, because I leave this afternoon, and hope we shall meet again.

Thank you.

6

The Wisdom Of Life

I was a frustrated fellow because I wanted to get into IIT [Indian Institute of Technology] and I never got in. I mean I never even applied, so that may be one reason why I'm in the spiritual life. [Laughs] Don't take that also seriously, because IIT is not the only life and there are billions of people who didn't go through IIT. No? And they are also happy, they are also wise, and whatever they need they get. Why I say this is because, nowadays you are trained to want more and more without really any need for more and more. And this is the cause of much of your frustration when you get into life and get a job. You guys start off at three lakhs a year, whatever it is, six lakhs a year, twenty lakhs a year, and then nothing to look forward to.

Of course, I shouldn't talk about it, but it's like Western romance, where they enjoy all the fruits of companionship and when they get married, there's nothing to look forward to. So they don't get married. You understand? So always have something... And when you need to go on having something ahead of you, the only field is spirituality, where there is always

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10 February 2002, Chennai, India

something more. And it is not the same as what you are having – it is not more money, or a bigger house, or a bigger car. You understand? After all, when you change cars you're only changing something smaller for something bigger. One of my friends bought one of these new Sonatas. For ten days he had been only rhapsodizing. You'd think he is describing Hema Malini {an actress} or something. "Oh look at her lines, Sahab! And look at her atmosphere inside, and {sniffs} perfume." And I said, "Are you describing a girl or a car?"

You know there was a psychological study about cars and how, to the male macho psychology, the car is very much a phallic symbol. It was a serious study and not some tomboyish, behind-the-toilet sort of affair. It was very much a serious study – why men prefer long bonnets in these racing cars. So, all these are symbols. And yesterday I read of a story where a man was an accountant, and he left two zeros, and consequently the stock market went down for their company, and everything crashed; because he forgot to add two zeros (maybe a computer error), because sometimes you don't know how many times you tapped.

When I buy something in the grocery store, these girls... I count how many times they tap. Once I bought something with a debit card. It was the first transaction. My curiosity was to see whether within seconds it would be reflected in my balance. So exactly opposite the street is their ATM machine. So I put in my card, punched my pin number and chose 'balance'. They call it a miniature balance, minibalance, something balance? Mini-statement! And I found that it had been debited twice. She had swiped it twice because she didn't get the signal. It had done two debits. So it was very useful for me. And I said, "No more debit cards." Because with credit cards you can't do it. Y ou have time to correct; you have to sign two slips. So modern technology is full of potholes like that.

You people, when you learn, of course the good things you learn, but you also have to learn the possibilities of going astray, holes in the heart, you know... So that is the thing. When we learn, we have to learn what is not useful. It's like frequently clearing up your hard disk, removing all the rubbish that we go on storing, you know – save, save, save. Same thing we do with money – save, save, save. And one day, you find the man gets a big heart attack because he has too much money. He doesn't know what to do with it. He invests – everything is unsafe and insecure. You can't keep it at home, you can't bury it under the ground like in the good old days we used to do. So what do you do with it?

And I have often wondered – economics, whatever it may say – what happens to a big horde of treasure when it is lost? Nobody feels it. If you look at all those Portuguese galleons which went with billions in today's dollars in gold and jewellery, and they were sunk by the British. You know The Armada? Surely some of you have read of The Armada. All that treasure was lost, and humanity didn't feel it. *Illiya?* [Isn't it?] How many of you are Tamilians? *Thamizhil* *solluva mayire pochu.* [An insignificant loss.] That is all the effect that it has. Billions of dollars sunk in the oceans – no impact on us. So we must have the right attitude about money, the right attitude about hoarding wealth, the right attitude about how it should affect my life. If it is not going to contribute to the quality of my life, money is useless. Understand? Today money only enslaves us more and more. We have to buy Slick [polish] for the floors in our flats, and then because they're slippery, you carpet them. Now because you have a high value carpet you buy a vacuum cleaner. Because you have a vacuum cleaner you enter into a service contract – it goes on and on and on. Then, toilet to match. To keep the toilet clean, so many sprays, and squeeze bottles!

My guruji and I, we were once travelling together – this was long ago, I think in 1966 or '67. I took him by road all over south India. It was in the early days before we had centres. We landed up in Bangalore where I had a room in not a very posh hotel (Woodlands). Woodlands is very run of the mill, but for him from Shahjahanpur, it was a great room. He sat on my bed, it was just an iron bedstead like in hospitals, but it had a blanket. He went on fingering it and he said, "*Yeh kumbal kiska hai?* [Whose blanket is this?]" I said, "Hotel." "*Aur bistra?* [And the bed?]" "Hotel." Then he said, "I want to spit." So I took him to the bathroom. Comparatively clean, you know, white porcelain and clean. He said, "Where should I spit? *Kahaan thhuke hum?*" I said, "*Jahaan chaahein thhukiye aap.* [You may spit wherever you want.]" "*Nahin,*

nahin, isme thhuke to koi naaraaz to nahi hoga? [Will anyone get angry if I spit here?]" *S*o that is going to the extreme of cleanliness.

I have often found in American houses (may I be excused by present company who have been in the States), the toilet is often the cleanest part of the house. All perfumed towels, perfumed this, and toilet rolls – big racks of them. So you pull out the smallest and then the next one comes. I don't know why they need so many of them. I mean, a dozen toilet rolls, beautiful pink tissues. I often feel like taking a couple of those rolls home because they're nice for cleaning glasses and they're pretty expensive. So sense of proportion is lost. When you get wealthy, sense of proportion is lost, and then we suffer. So just a little homely truth which you all know – I am not telling you anything that you don't know, you understand? But my experience of life has taught me the importance of doing what we know we should do, and not just *knowing* what we should do. There is a big difference. Like the difference between science and technology. Science teaches you something: theories, hypotheses, et cetera. Technology helps you to translate that knowledge into the practical life.

So we have to be spiritual technologists. We all know everything that is right. There is nobody in creation, not even a dog, which does not know what is right. Have you seen a dog behaving when it has done something wrong? It will look like this and creep along the door, along the wall, and come under your seat, and a little bit of tail, just to take your attention. It will be wagging like this, waiting for a small sign.

If you just smile, it is on top of you. It takes it that it is excused. So there is nobody who does not know what is right and what is wrong. Even babies! A baby drops this, and it will rush to its mother crying. Why? because there is something innate, like a radar system. Like birds navigate over the ocean; the whales go from one corner of the earth to the other corner of the earth. Tiny birds, this size, six thousand miles they fly over the ocean. Can you imagine? And nobody still knows how. Some people say magnetic current, some people say ocean currents. I don't know – so many theories.

And the third thing to know is that science is full of hypothesis; there is no real knowledge in science. This has been said by the greatest people, including Einstein, including that fellow, Stephen Hawking. Everything is hypothesis in science. It can be overturned any day. Like the universe is expanding. Nobody knows. Can you go up and measure? You are part of the universe. How can you see? Isn't it? So, don't put too much trust in science, because everything is hypothetical. You know there is a saying that the discoveries for which people got the Nobel Prize thirty years ago, that same discovery has been turned upside down; and for that, another scientist gets some Nobel Prize now. He did not get the Nobel Prize for doing something which brought home the truth. He got the Nobel Prize for his original research and for postulating something which could be applicable.

Like, one day they say, "Cardiac [problem], you must have rest." Another day they say, "No, no, you must have exercise." Ten years ago, if you had an open-heart surgery you had to rest for three months. Now they say, "After one week you start walking." You follow? Once upon a time if you had serious heart surgery, "No more lovemaking." Today they say, "Healthy lovemaking strengthens the heart." Now what are these theories worth?

So we have to try, in our own [laughs] – I'm not suggesting anything [laughs] – in our own experience, we have to find out what is good for us. Because, like a spectrum of colours, they're all good; there's no such thing as a bad colour in the spectrum. Can it be? But each one has a taste – I like red, you like blue, he likes pink, he likes white. And there are so many reds, so many blues; so much so that you have to code them by colour index. Isn't it? So, there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so. Who said it? Shakespeare. So what is good or bad is totally a personal exposure to the world. So they also say, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," is not right. If it is a goose and gander, perhaps. But what is good for the cow is not necessarily good for the dog; it may not be good at all for the human being. You understand? The doctor says, somebody should avoid starch; to others he says, "Eat more carbohydrates."

So forget this fantasy that there are universally applicable values. There are not – as far as material values are concerned. What are universally applicable? The spiritual values of truth, love, sympathy, honesty, empathy, service. You understand? These are universally applicable. You can call them moral values, you can call them spiritual values; it makes no difference. As far as the material universe is concerned, no two people can have the same good from the same goods. You better make sure you remember all this.

I welcome you to our Mission. I pray that you will keep a level head. My cousin has been in the Navy for four decades now, and he knows the value of proper navigation. With right navigation you can go through life. I was once told by a sailor, "A boat which sails – even with a wind which is almost coming from head on, you can navigate into the wind if you know how to manipulate your sails. Of course, it will take a little like this but you still go ahead, not backwards. Otherwise, you're blown back." So you have to do it. "The wind blows..." – as the Bible says, "The wind blows where it listeth." You cannot control the wind, but you can use the wind if you know how to do it. You understand? So life's circumstances look sometimes favourable, look sometimes unfavourable. It is for you to turn everything unfavourable into favourable, and keep favourable as favourable. This is the wisdom of life. Now I won't talk any more. Thank you.

Enough! No? Enough is enough. My Master said when enough is enough anything more is too much.

[...]

In 1967 I was already a preceptor. My Master called me and said, "I can see in your heart that you want to serve me." I said, "Yes, Babuji." He said, "May I request you something?" You know, he did not order people around. He said, "Can I request you something?" I said, "You are my Guru, you can order." He said, "No, no, I don't order, because if you disobey, then there are two sins: the sin, whatever it may be, and the sin of disobedience. So I prefer to request. Then there is no problem for you." I said, "Okay, go ahead." He said, "I want you to give all your holidays to me." This was in 1967. I never took any holiday after that. In the sense that everybody goes to Ooty, and Paris, I don't know where else. *"Sari apki chhutti hamare haath me supurd kar do.* [Entrust all your holidays to me.]" So I could travel with him, and that was to my benefit, of course.

[Master joking with the youngsters]

Some of these guys must be wondering who is this guy sitting in front of us. We heard so much about spirituality and... [Laughs] Spirituality is both material life, spiritual life. And spirituality is also man and woman; spirituality is also human being and God. No? There are always these two things. And my Master said, God is not a fool to create two sexes if one was enough. Any of you studied biology? You know how the amoeba divides? By fission. It doesn't seek a mate. [Laughs] It must be very angry with God, if it knew what it is all about. It must be glaring at God. [Laughs]

We were talking about this new Macintosh machine. You know they make it shapely and, now-a-days, very feminine looking with contours. So he was extolling it for half-an-hour. He said mine is better! [Laughter]

Master: What, Chintu? He is my Master's grandson – that guy at the back.

A: Master, yesterday I was feeling like thought power goes all over. When we were coming back from HTC around 6.30, the four of us, Shiva, myself and others were discussing that we will have a kind of small meeting only with HTC abhyasis down the line. Today it is happening.

Master: I told them we should combine…

A: At the beach in fact you had said…

Master: Yes, it was only at the beach…

Chintu: We are not aware of that. We had separate thoughts – just connected to you somehow.

Master: Babuji Maharaj used to say, when you have thoughts which are in tune with what Nature wants, they happen.

A: Obviously.

M: Then you cannot say, "I thought and it happened." When your thoughts don't go with Nature's will, it doesn't happen. It's as simple as that. Like floating downstream in a river. If you are floating downstream, you don't even have to do anything, you float. If you want to go upstream...

A: Master, how do you differentiate between aspiration and ambition?

M: Ambition is material: I want more money, bigger house, bigger car, more friends, more success, more prominence, more power. It is all ambition. But if you want, for instance, even if you want to have more education, without relating it to money... See the modern problem is, people want to become doctors because of lot of money in it. So they bribe their way through the education. And then they don't know which side the heart is, where the liver is, and most of them are out to gain because of their certificates – it says they can do something. I'm not joking. If you remove their medical certificates, seventy out of every hundred surgeons would be in jail – as high as that!

A: Master, some of them ask, "We are already happy, and we are good to our families, friends. We are already …"

M: But we are not doing spirituality to be happy.

A: Then they ask, "Why should we take up this spirituality?"

A: No, no, that's what I said. We're not doing it to be happy. Why should I eat healthy? I'm already healthy. Okay, eat unhealthy and see where you are tomorrow. No? "No, I have a very sound heart, Sir. My father died at eighty-five; my grandfather outlived him. If I smoke, what does it matter?" You won't see the effect immediately, no? There's no cigarette that you puff and you drop dead – unfortunately. If there were cigarettes like that you would appreciate; but they take fifty years to kill you. So in Tamil we have a proverb… *enna solradhu Thamizhle? '…inru kollum, kadavul ninru kolvana?'* [What to say in Tamil?]

A: "*Arasan andre kolvan; deivam nindru kollum.*"

M: *Arasan andre kolvan; deivam nindru kollum.* King will lop off your head; God waits. And He doesn't wait to execute the sentence. He waits, for you may get your senses back and reform. He gives you time, for your sake. Civil law, or criminal law gives you time, say thirty years in jail, for its own sake. It wants to isolate unsocial people into jail so that you're not a menace to them. You understand? Even when time is given, why is He giving me time? Suppose the boss calls one of his very senior programmers and says, "I give you three days," it means "...or else!"

We are not asking you to be perfect human beings because *we want* you to be perfect. We want you to be perfect so that you will be perfect for yourselves, for your sake. Understand? And remember that perfection means sacrifice. I've often thought why a stone is a stone and a human being is not – because suppose a stone, a block of stone wants to become a Mona Lisa, it cannot do it itself. No? So some artist like Michelangelo has to come and... what does he do? He sees the form, but he only removes all that should not be there, isn't it? And it is perfect. And theoretically, that piece of rock can contain infinite number of forms, depending on what you see in it. So you have *infinite* potential in each one of you. The only difference between the rock and you is that you *can* work on yourself. So I hope you will all do it.

Thank you.

7

A Call to Duty

On behalf of all of you, this property is dedicated to my Divine Master Babuji Maharaj in the understanding that it is therefore his. And whether it is the Mission or individual plots allotted to abhyasis, these are only for our temporal existence and therefore everything belongs to Him. All this dedication only means we are giving back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And when you occupy, build and occupy your houses, I hope this spirit will prevail that this is really Master's property which I am occupying. It is mine because it is given to me to occupy; one day I will have to vacate it, and then it reverts back to Him. The Shastra says, even your body is not yours. You are only a temporary occupant of your body. How long you occupy it depends on His will. So when your body is not yours, how can your house be yours, or your land be yours? So I hope this spirit, this spiritual truth will prevail, that nothing is mine except as allotted by him for the time allotted by him.

We have always to be reminded of these facts because otherwise, all the problems in this world are

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Land dedication for Zonal Ashram, 20 February 2002, Hyderabad about places and things – property, or … [Disturbance in the microphone] (Stop fooling around with this microphone set!) As Ramakrishna Paramahamsa said, "Kaamini and kaanchana. [A beautiful woman and gold.]" (Tell them not to fiddle around with this. In Europe you never see a microphone being adjusted all the time. This, "Hello, hello! One, two, three, four…" This is India, where nothing works when it should, and works perfectly when it is not necessary.) [Disturbance again in the microphone] I think Babuji does not want to listen to me. Perhaps after the dedication there is nothing more to be said. I would like to request our brothers here to arrange for a good microphone set when the ashram is built, because once it is set, it must not need to be set again and again and again. I mean I have been talking all over the world – you never see a microphone set being adjusted. You go and speak, and that is it. Here they tap on it. We destroy everything by tapping.

We should always stick to quality and not quantity. Babuji Maharaj said this about abhyasis – quality! He said, no sheep – lions. And I am reminded of that famous scene in the Mahabharat, when Bharat Chakravarti said, "I have ten sons but I don't find any of them qualified to be the next king after me," and he brought in an outsider; and that voice which is supposed to be the voice of Divinity says, "The right of *janma* [birth] has been thrown aside, and the right of karma has come into existence." That means He who does, is best for the job. We are all too prone to give importance to somebody's son, somebody's nephew, somebody's niece, somebody's niece's husband, in selection. *Paaramparic* [dynastic] politics, paaramparic cinema stars. Every cinema star today had a father who is a cinema star. Why should it be paaramparic? So, as long as we don't select people, places, things according to ability to work and to perform, we are condemned to an existence where nothing works, people don't work, things don't work and the places are useless.

Whether it is choosing a place for an ashram or a bride, or somebody to do the work, if you do not follow this principle of karma: he who performs best is the only man who should be given that job, we are condemned to a nation where politics is caste-dominated, religion-dominated, hatred-dominated, frustration-dominated, and therefore, to overcome all these, corruption comes. What you cannot elect, you buy. The politician buys votes and we buy the politician when it is our turn to work. This is very rampant in India. They buy our votes first, somebody gave a pair of dhotis and a sari, somebody gives an umbrella for the rain; somebody distributes lands which do not belong to him. Then, when they are elected to power, we buy them – for admission for our children, for jobs for our *damaads* [sons-in-laws] – for our *alludus*. So it is always trading, horse-trading, buying and selling.

In the Mission such things should not happen. One who should be made a prefect must be fit to work. Babuji Maharaj said, "Willingness to serve is the only criteria. Fitness we can give." But that is spirituality. You cannot select a collector by saying, "Are you willing to be a collector? I will make you fit." So in temporal work, fitness comes first. In spiritual work, willingness comes first. You cannot apply the law of temporal existence to spiritual environment. And you cannot apply the laws of spirituality to the temporal environment. Marriage is also similar. "Are you willing to marry?"

So I hope you people of Andhra Pradesh who have gathered here in large numbers will remember that God did not create Andhra Pradesh. This is the division which came artificially into existence much to the misery of subsequent generations. And the perpetrator of that misery, the creator of that misery has become a great man. I don't want to name him; of course you all know him. The wrong type of sacrifice only leads to the wrong type of creation of environment, and situations where that misery is perpetuated by further division of the country into further linguistic states.

So if the beginning is wrong, everything goes wrong after that. One man's terrorism is another man's patriotism. We call people terrorists whom the country across the border calls patriots. The man inside the temple who talks nonsense is a priest; the man on this side who listens to all that is a devotee. And both are sinners. Our temples of worship, our temples of government, our temples of education, our temples of health (hospitals), everywhere there is corruption. Because students get classes, get admission by bribery, subsequently, they go to the examinees or the examiners of papers, bribe and get themselves passed. And then we pay thousands of rupees to have the lungs removed instead of the heart. Nobody knows what's happening because the man who is behind all this is allowed to sign a certificate saying he is dead.

Everything depends on the individual. There is no such thing as *daiva shakti* [divine power]. All over North India, they are waiting for Ram Rajya, but I am sure if Rama comes today, nobody will recognize him. They will say it must be Amitabh Bachchan [an actor] playing the role. In South India if Krishna comes, it will be brother N.T. Rama Rao. "No, no, Sir, what, in Kali Yuga, how can Krishna come, or Rama come?" Very true – therefore we have actors, actresses. And we are all actors and actresses because we are pretending to be that which we are not. Essentially acting is doing something which you are not: A human being pretending to be God; God pretending to be a human being. So when we are natural, we are what we are. And this naturalness must be preserved, because we are in Sahaj Marg. Otherwise like lawyers say in North India, "We are liars." [Mispronouncing 'lawyers'] In making that statement, they tell the truth for once in their lives, I think. And when they say, "I am a criminal liar," it is even better. But we must remember we are all criminal liars, without being lawyers. Lawyers are only licensed liars like doctors are licensed killers.

If you want this to stop, you have to act. You people have to act. Choose wisely. Don't vote for a Reddy because you are a Reddy. Don't vote for a Khamma because you are a Khamma. Don't vote for a Brahmin because you are a Brahmin. Vote for him who is right, who is fit. Then you will have good government. In your Mission, you will have good spirituality. "No, no, sir, we have so many Reddy abhyasis, but no Reddy prefect," means, now you are into politics; you are no more in spirituality. No, no, I heard this from one of my elder brothers in the Mission who used to be here, centre-in-charge. He made the comment that Babuji was too Brahmin in his outlook, because all the prefects were Brahmins. I said, "I don't see any Brahmin." I meant it in two senses. He said, "Sir, Dr. Varadachari, Brahmin; he brought Seshadri, he is a Brahmin. He brought Vira Raghavan, he is a Brahmin. He brought Rajagopalachari (my father), he is a Brahmin." I said, "What about you? You are not a Brahmin. What about so many others here? They are not Brahmins!" "No, no, sir but that is not the rule which is being followed." I said, "When there are seventy-seven non-Brahmins and four Brahmins you have named, how can you say Babuji is caste-conscious and he is choosing only Brahmins?" – prejudice.

Now if you build a wall, it may be difficult to break, but you can break it. But for a non-existent wall which is called this sort of difference in our minds – prejudices, it is impossible to destroy it even for a master. Master tried his best to remove such tendencies from the minds of people to make them human beings and not Brahmins, or Reddys or Khammas or what have you, but they persisted remaining like that. So as long as *you* persist, spirituality cannot succeed. Remember, there is no Divine force which can work against the human will. The only way it can work is when this impudence of the human being and his resistance to Divine law or Truth becomes *so* much, becomes so much, that… *destroy! Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavati…* [Whenever dharma is threatened God arrives.] So beware! When God comes down to earth, he comes only to destroy. Jesus Christ may have said, "I come not to destroy but to fulfill." But our avatars have said very clearly, "*Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavati…*" – I am coming here to destroy the evil-doer.

Kamsa destroyed, Ravana destroyed, Shishupala destroyed – because what cannot be taught through your understanding, through your sense, through your heart, has to be destroyed. It is not that God is an angry God like in the Jewish tradition. Even He cannot find another way of restoring harmony, peace, bliss on earth except to destroy the old crop, set fire to it and make it fertilize the new crop like every agriculturist knows. So when we go on in our impudence, flourishing our castes, flourishing our this and flourishing our that, creating more and more differences where unity should reign, creating more and more states what should be only one country, we are inviting destruction. And when destruction comes, it can come like that little insect in a lemon which came for Pareekshit, it doesn't have to come like Vasuki. A tiny insect in a lemon became a snake and killed Pareekshit. Understand? Always evil comes through cracks in windows, under doors, through the water pipe; you cannot seal it out. So, if you want to be beyond attack by evil forces, you must become so good that evil cannot stand in your presence, like darkness cannot exist where there is light.

So long as you are still in the blighted state of preferring the darkness of casteism, of separatism, of so many tendencies which are created by jealousies, by covetousness, by greed, we continue to keep this *karma bhoomi* as *mrutyuloka* [earth as the land of death], and in what form death comes, how does it matter? The man is bitten by a snake and dies, or he succumbs to a cancer, or if he is run over by a lorry, what does it matter? Death has many forms, truth has only one. And if you do not accept this principle that we have to be united, we have to get rid of caste, we have to get rid of colour, we have to get rid of all these things like *pradesh-s* [states], and bring back unity where there is multiplicity, divisiveness, diversity, our Mission will become a lie. The teaching of the master will fade off, because subsequent generations of prefects and teachers will corrupt it, regionalise it, make it casteistic. "No, no, sir, Sahaj Marg Andhra Pradesham is different from Sahaj Marg of Aravam." [Laughter] "Brahmin Sahaj Marg is different from Reddy Sahaj Marg." [Laughter] It will become like that, don't laugh. Because they will say, "We are Telugus, our *sampradaaya* [tradition] says. We want *bangaru* [gold] and also Kangaroo and also Rangaroo" [laughs] – cannot have it. This or that: *satyam* or *asatyam* [truth or untruth]; *jeevan* or *maran* [life or death]. Living dead is an idea of spirituality where you are alive but live as if you don't exist. That's the only state in which you can be active without *you* acting. You can be active without your ego being active. It is the only state where He works through you.

So, spirituality is not something of a *tamaasha* [fun]. It can be very enjoyable, it can bring you bliss, it can bring you contentment, *if* it is practiced correctly; and you must be willing to practice it correctly without saying, "Oh, he doesn't do it, she doesn't do it." It doesn't matter who does it or not. If you are interested in your personal liberation while here on earth, these values are not only to be merely talked about, not merely cherished, but must be applied in our individual lives. It is in that hope, it is with that intention, it is with that ultimate aim that ashrams are constructed. It is again with that hope and aspiration that prefects are made and if the prefects don't do what they should in these ashrams, the ashram will become another guest house where good food can be served, entertainment is given, everything else happens except the spiritual life.

So, today my message is a *call to duty*, proper performance of your duty by abhyasis, right performance of your duty by prefects, so that the Master will bless and will see that His wish on earth is fulfilled for your benefit, for your growth, for your liberation.

Thank you.

8

Go On Doing His Work

My respected elder brother Sarnad Saheb, at whose very affectionate invitation I am here. Sarnadji is a very shy person, not given to expressiveness in human terms, and I am also something like that. So over the years my relationship with Sarnadji has been one of admiration and respect and regard expressed from a distance, which I have often hoped I could reduce but [chuckles] I found it easier to get close to my Master, but I could not get so close to Sarnadji. Because, where there is respect there is always a barrier. It is not that I did not have respect for my Master, but my love for my Master was much more than my respect for my Master. I think respect which comes from love is like the respect of that man who had to give his eyes to Shiva. He took out one eye and put it in the Shiva *linga* [statue of Lord Shiva] or whatever it was; then he put his foot on the Shiva's second eye where there was no eye, took out his second eye and put it. Also like the gopis, when Lord Krishna failed to have a headache [removed] and said, "Only the *paada dhooli*

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22 February 2002, Gulbarga Ashram, India

[dust of the feet] of *bhaktas* [devotees], those who love me can do it," Narada was trying his best to get some paada dhooli but nobody would give. Because the condition was, one who offered the dust of his feet to remove the headache of Lord Krishna would have to go to *naraka* [hell] for ten thousand years. Even for the sake of the Lord we do not want to go naraka for ten thousand years. So ultimately the gopis said, "What is this nonsense? I am prepared to go eternally to hell if my Lord's headache can be solved." So that sort of thing.

But I must assure you that I have loved my elder brother always as an elder brother, apart from respecting him. But from the beginning, this is a historical fact: there has been for me a problem with Karnataka. I remember once my Master told me that, "You are able to get on with the people of Uttar Pradesh." I said, "Babuji, I feel I was in Uttar Pradesh in a past life, perhaps in many past lives." Because when I enter Uttar Pradesh, I feel something in my heart; something as if my heart will break. Even today it happens. I don't know, it is past historical association, past birth or past association with my Guruji himself, I feel it in several places. And once I had this thought that when Babuji Maharaj asked me to inaugurate the Bangalore ashram, I think it was from his side a deliberate effort to try to introduce me into the Karnataka Sahaj Marg scene. Because who am I to inaugurate an ashram when my Guruji was present? He said, "No, no, *Tum karoge.* [You will do it]." Perhaps that was the first step. And the second obstacle has been the personal loyalties of people, not so much to the guru as to other people whom they have taken as mini-gurus.

In Shahjahanpur whenever Sarnadji was there, he always welcomed me when I entered the ashram. In fact once I was very moved when he actually hugged me. I was really moved that, here is a heart from Karnataka which is recognizing this humility inside but apparent arrogance outside. Because I have always been known to be an arrogant man, but which is not true. I mean I have Babuji's authority for saying it because Babuji said, "You are tall, you are powerful, you speak forcefully; therefore people say you are arrogant." I said, "Would you like me to change?" He said, "Not at all. If you have to be changed, I would have changed you." So my respects are always at Sarnadji's feet, my devotion for him. I regard him as one of my teachers in Sahaj Marg, because I have learnt a lot from him, too. And if I am here today, as I said, it is because of him and him alone. He is an outstanding example of what a man can become. Many people think others to be great, but greatness which is visible is not always greatness. True greatness is invisible. It is inside. It is manifested occasionally in flashes, like in a beautiful smile, like in this wonderful lecture he just gave us about *sharanaagati* [surrender].

We need people like Sarnadji to speak to us more and more. But unfortunately it is also the nature of greatness that it seeks to hide itself, and that I don't think is so desirable. Because if we cannot give of what we have, what else do we have to give? I mean if a rose does not smell and if it is just a paper rose, I mean, it may look beautiful from a distance but it is of no use to us. So I have a, may I say, a very heartfelt request that Sarnadji should speak more and more and on more and more occasions because we need advice.

My father used to say, the young must serve with their strength – strength of the body, because they are powerful. Nature has endowed them with muscular strength, brute strength, if you will, and that is our service. As we grow older, we must serve with our knowledge – *vidya daanam* [giving away of knowledge]. When we grow very old and we are spiritual, we must serve with our experience. Strength, knowledge, experience – three things must come together in a saintly person. *Udaaharanam* [Example], my guru Maharaj. He was apparently weak to look at; he liked to go to bed whenever he could. But if he had to walk, he could walk. If he had to climb stairs, he could climb stairs. He never asked how many steps. Because I have told you, once we had to go to the British High Commission in Madras for a visa. There was no lift. Electricity was not there, so I said, "Babuji we have to walk" and he walked. And the High Commission was on the second floor and he was on the third floor. I had to go and bring him down. I said, "Babuji, you are going on walking." He said, "*Tum ne nahin roka hame* – you didn't stop me," he said. I was huffing and puffing and here was this old man perfectly calm. Then he came to the Consul's table, he didn't speak at all, which shows that you must speak when necessary.

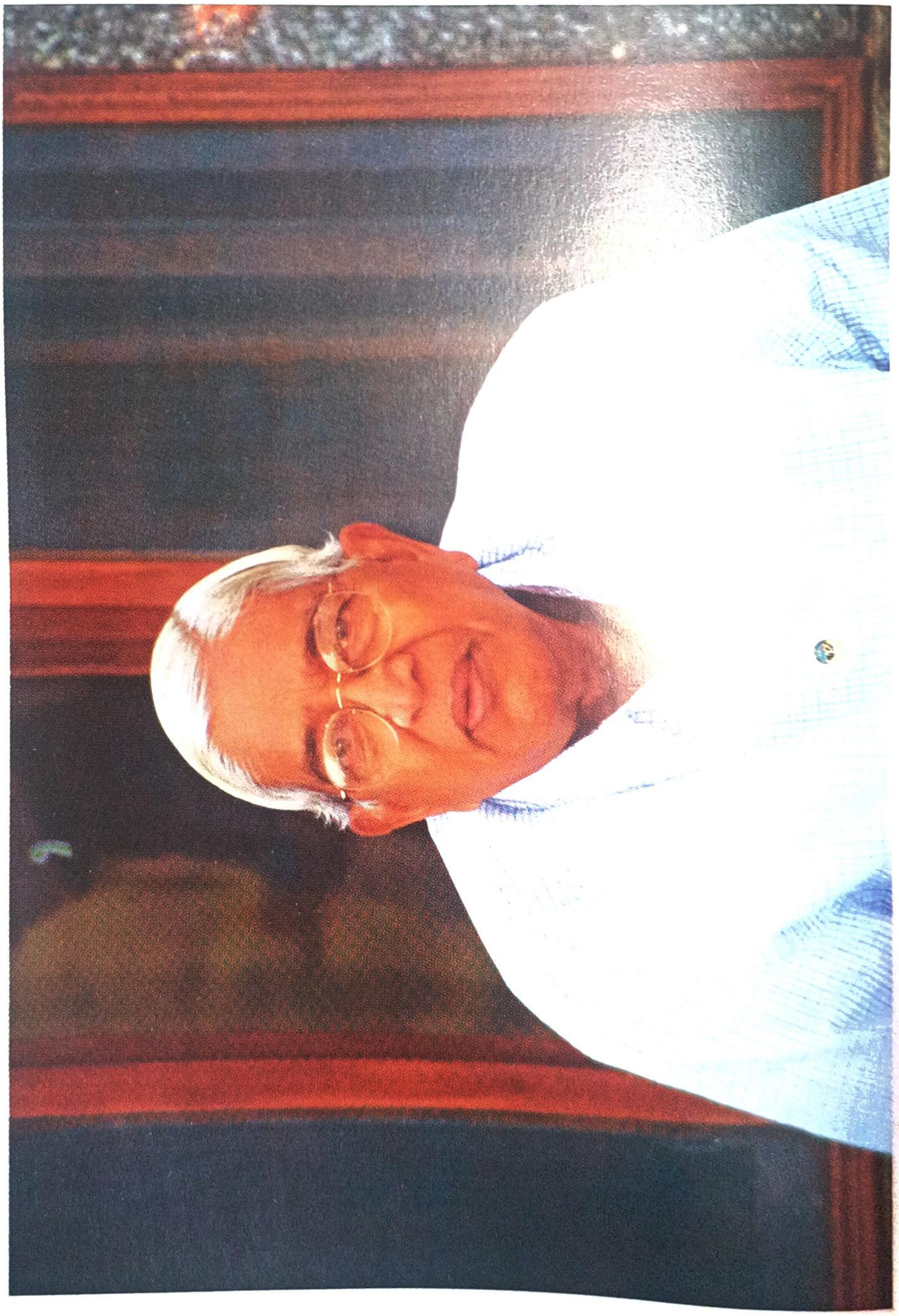
He who speaks on every opportunity, every occasion, asked or unasked – that too is no good. The person must assess the need of the moment and give what is necessary. If a hungry man comes you feed him. Suppose a man who is starving and who is thirsty, he comes to you, and you say, "No, no I am a prefect, I will give you a sitting," it is ridiculous. *Sthoola* [material] requirements also have to be met by the Sahaj Marg system. We have to look after our abhyasis. We have to provide reasonably comfortable accommodation, reasonably good food, nourishing, but not necessarily tasty.

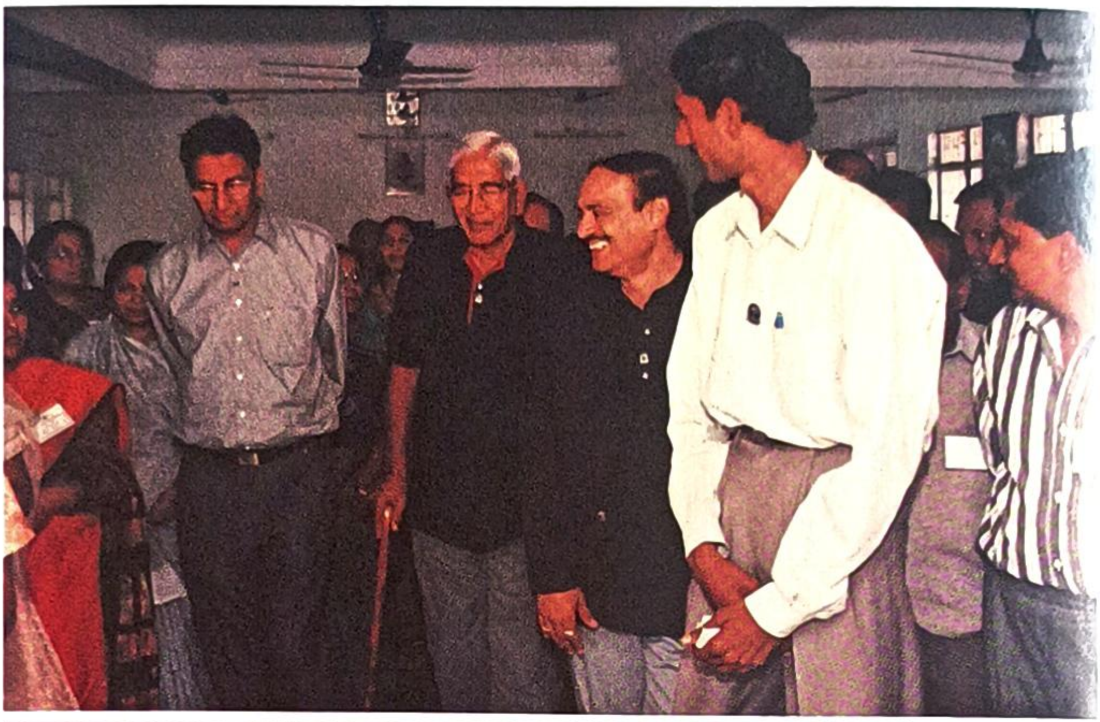
I remember once I proposed to Babuji that we buy a bus to take people from the station to the ashram in Shahjahanpur. He said, "I like your idea but I don't approve it." That shows two things, one – you can like but you need not approve. Something you approve, you may not have to like. I said, "Why?" He said, "Too much comfort is bad in an abhyasi's life. They become lazy. You provide *gaddhis* [mattresses], they don't get up when the bell rings. You give good food, they eat *bharpoor* [heavily] as we say, and then they snore during satsanghs. So everything to the necessary minimum aspect; not maximum aspect."

Sahaj Marg does not guarantee a health beyond the minimum necessary for you to perform your work. Babuji Maharaj told me, "It is good to be in exuberant health, but that is for athletes. You are not going to climb the Everest. Nor are you going to run the four-minute mile. You must have a reasonable capacity to walk where necessary. But you *have* to maintain your health to do your Master's work, and that much health you must always maintain." He did not say, "I will give you." *You* have to maintain. So people who say, "I am spiritual, I don't care for the body," they are also stupid, because to maintain the body as a fit vehicle for our work to go on, is our duty (*kartavyam*). *Kartavya paalanam* [Performing one's duty] does not mean only looking after the wife and the children. It means looking after yourself, so that you can also look after your wife and children while doing the Master's work. Because many people are inclined to be slightly what should I say, off the track in this matter and say, "No, no, sir, I don't need food, I don't need this." People give so many sittings that they don't sleep. Then their wives complain that they don't go to work.

I have before me an abhyasi who says, "My wife will work and I will come with you." "*Purusha lakshanam udyogam,*" my wife used to say. *Udyogam purusha lakshanam.* [Being employed is the mark of a man]. Because when Babuji was there, I used to try not to go to work. At 7.30 my wife would lecture me upstairs. "No, no, you must go to work." I said, "What for?" "Udyogam purusha lakshanam" – I have heard this one hundred thousand times! Then while we were having idli or whatever Babuji liked at home, he would say, "*Tum aaj daftar nahi ja rahe ho?* [Are you not going to work?]" "*Nahin, nahin* [No, no] Babuji, I thought [since] you are here..." "*Dekho, kaam karna aavashyak hai. Daftar chale jao. Hum to yahaan baithe hi hain.* [It is necessary to work. You go to your office. I will be here.]" And the funny thing is, at 10.30 I would get a call from home that Babuji wants you. But that is also obedience. Going is obedience, coming back when he calls... I cannot tell him, "Oh, just now you said... You are fickle. At one minute you say go to office, second minute you say come back from office. One minute you give me one hour sitting, another time you give me forty-five second sitting. What sort of Master are you? Crazy Master!"

Once he made me fast for five days. It is in my books. First day he said, "*Tum kal khaana nahi khaoge.* [You will not eat tomorrow.]" I said, "*Theek hai.* [It is all right.]" Second day, he said, "*Agar tum se kahen kal tum khana mat khao, koi harz to nahi*? [If I ask you not to eat tomorrow, is there a problem?]" I said, "Not at all." Third day he said, "*Dekho, ek baat hai. Hum nahi chahte hain ki kal tum khaana khao, lekin gussa to nahi ho jaoge?* [See, I don't want you to eat tomorrow, but you will not get angry, will you?]" [Laughter] I said, "*Nahin, aapse hum kaise gussa ho sakte hain.* [No, how can I get angry with you?]" Fourth day, he said, "*Dekho bahut aaj hame takleef ho rahi hai, hum kaise tumse kahen, kal bhi mat khaana.* [I feel bad to ask you not to eat tomorrow as well.]" I said, "Very good. I have lasted for three days." Fourth day... Fifth day he said, "Lalaji *Saab keh rahe hain ki dekho...* [See, Lalaji Sahab is saying...]" [Laughter] You know the rest. So five days I fasted. Of course on the sixth day morning, I got something. It's not necessary to talk about, but I asked one question, "Why did you not tell me in the first day itself, you have to fast five days?" He said, "*Dekho tum niraash ho jaate.* [You would have felt





downcast.]" If I had told you all of a sudden that you have to fast for five days, you might have thought, "What is this?" Little by little, little by little. So, this is also a path where we take you little by little at a time. Not beyond your strength of endurance. Not beyond your willingness to accept. Because human beings are animals which are endowed with wisdom and will, both of which we don't use and therefore we remain animals.

When Babuji said we are born animals, and most of us die as animals, it is because we don't use our wisdom and our will. What is the difference between animal life and human life? – Only these two things. So we have to be like that famous story of a princess in an ivory tower – no doors, and the beloved waiting here and she waiting there. And then a saint told him, "Catch a beetle, put honey on its antenna and put it up, facing up, and tie a silk thread to its tail, the little tail." He did it, and it followed the honey smell and went up. When it reached she said, "Now you tie a cotton thread" – pulled it up. Then he tied thicker thread, and finally a rope and the princess pulled it up, tied it on her waist and came down. This is used as an *udaaharanam* [example] in Pranayama and in other yogic techniques. We also have to do it. Babuji had to confess that, he had reduced meditation time from one hour to half an hour because nobody will obey. He said, even in thirty minutes, there are few people who meditate for five minutes. All the rest of the time they think they are meditating. They are thinking of their home, their office – so many things.

So, Sahaj Marg is not a system where we order – *aadesh!* Everybody in Uttar Pradesh will say, "Aadesh *keejiye.* [Please give me an order.]" No aadesh because, as Babuji said, aadesh means a second sin of disobedience. Every aadesh is going to be disobeyed – few exceptions. Sarnadji gave the experience of Bharat – Lord Rama saying, "If Bharat tells me to come, I will come back to Ayodhya." Bharat could not. In the Mahabharata you have the same idea repeated in Radha's life. When Krishna has to go to Mathura, all the gopis say, "Don't go." And finally they tell Radha, "You tell Him, He won't go." She says, "How can I tell Him not to go? He is not God only for me or you; He is for the world. We have to let Him go now." So the wisdom that comes out of love is liberating. So when Babuji loves, He does not give us a permissive love that you can do what you like. "You want to eat four *parathas*, you eat." He says, minimum for maximum benefit.

I once asked Satyapal in one of my first Basant Panchamis – they used to give in a clay vessel like this half a dozen *boondis* [sweets]. It was exceptionally good. So I said, "Satyapal, *thoda aur do.* [Give me some more]." Babuji was standing behind me. I didn't notice. But even if I had noticed, I would have asked because it was so tasty. He tapped me on the shoulder, and said, "Parthasarathi, prasad must be taken only in tiny quantities, so that what you take inside is not thrown out – *mal moothra ityaadi roop mein sharir se visarjan nahin hona chaahiye."* See, it is sacred. This is prasad precisely because it is sacred. And you want to take like this [with both hands] from temples, two *sers* of *halwa*. So the best things in life come in tiny doses – *anoraniyaan* [smaller than the smallest]. And what is the effect? *Mahatomahiyaan* [bigger than the biggest].

One transmission for one second accepted properly in the heart of the abhyasi, and he can be in the divine state instantly. This is anoraniyaan, mahatomahiyaan. That it is the description of divinity of God – it is not relevant to Sahaj Marg. We have to accept the anoraniyaan – transmission which penetrates into the heart. When Hiranyakashipu was intolerable, even to God, he could only be destroyed. Narasimha came and – *samhaara* [destruction]. So Babuji always used to say, when you get God outside, He comes as a judge, He comes as a punisher. In Him there is no humanity, there is no mercy. He may liberate you in the process of killing you. But killed you are. So we have this difference between *jeevan mukti* [liberation] where you are alive and you are liberated. Not killed and liberated. So in a sense, Babuji used to say, beware of looking for God outside, because that God is not one who is going to be favourable to you. He will be judgemental. He will say, "This you have done, this you have not done. *Tolo, bhejo narak mein.* [Judge – send him to hell]." One who is inside me in his minutest – anoraniyaan means smaller than the atom – He is me. He is my Self.

So Sahaj Marg, we have to properly understand. It is of course a path of *bhakti* [devotion]; it is also a path of *gnana* [knowledge] because all this understanding we require before we can properly follow. It is also karma path. We have to do our duty by our families, by our relations, by our society, while not neglecting our own Self. In all this comes the problem of *santulan* as they say – balance. Now who is to decide the nature of this balance? "Sir, how much time should I allot to my family, and how much time to sadhana?" It is a crazy question because it depends on you. There may be occasions when you have to look after the family all the time. Suppose somebody is sick, God forbid, you may not be able to meditate. It is not necessary. Babuji has given us the *brahmaastra* [the eternal weapon] or *Rama baan* [Rama's arrow] as you people say in Uttar Pradesh. You remember Him, it is enough. When you give medicine to the sick person, remember Him; when you feed, remember Him; even when you use the bed pan, remember Him. People are often funny. One man asked Babuji Maharaj, "Can I meditate in the toilet?" Babuji first said, "Mahatma Gandhi used to read the newspaper in the toilet." Now people who worship Saraswati, they will not allow a printed book to be taken inside. "*Ayyo,* Saraswati," they say. So this man was not happy. "That Gandhi read the newspaper is not really an answer to my question," he said. So I said, "Babuji, he is not satisfied." He said, "Is God not in the toilet, too?"

So where to meditate, when to meditate, are useless questions. *Meditate*. If that is the only place you can find for meditation and the only time you can find, do it. Otherwise if you don't meditate, what is the use? After all we eat everywhere. We eat in buses, we eat in bus stands. Don't you eat when you are hungry wherever you are? "No, no, I will go home and only at my dining table I will eat, after I have my bath." Few people say it. Meditation is a must – at the stated time if possible, otherwise whenever possible; at a reserved place whenever possible, if not, anywhere. If you do this, true abhyas results. "No, no sir, I missed this morning. Now it is already 7.30. Babuji Maharaj said *suryoday* [sunrise]." Gone! You are obeying Master in the wrong sense. Obedience must be in the right sense. If he said, "Arise before dawn, and paying attention to purity of body and mind, sit in a stated place for meditation," do it. But the place and time are not so important as the fact of meditation. And that we ignore, and we are paying attention to the place and time and not meditating. Beautiful pooja rooms where nothing happens.

So, when we want to see the essence as somebody said, to look at the essence of the Master, unless we have developed the ability to go into the essence of an instruction... "What is it that I have to do now, before dawn?" First thing is to awake. "No, no sir, I am not able to wake up before eight o' clock. I have amnesia; I have so many 'easias' – and one is the easy chair! And what is the use of then trying to obey, because you are not able to obey even the first thing." Babuji said it is not important. A set of instructions need not be followed serially. Suppose you are unable to practice maxim number one, start with maxim number two. As Buddha is supposed to have answered, "Chain of samskara – where to cut?" "Cut it anywhere; and it is broken." No, no, where is the beginning?" "Well, a circle has no beginning. The beginning is where you touch it." So we are always using our intellect even to decide on what we should obey. As Sarnadji correctly said, "Is what the guru telling me *anukoolam* [agreeable]? Is what the guru telling me good to be followed?" Babuji Maharaj said, "All these questions you should ask before you attach yourself to the guru. Ask every possible question that you can. After that, no questions." "No, no, Sahab, Babuji Maharaj told me we have liberty to question" – before you accept him as a Master. It is like marriage. You can ask about a girl anything you want before marriage: How many sisters has she? How many brothers? Are they married? Is the father a drunkard? What is their reputation in society? What is their *gotra* [lineage], bank balance. Everything you can ask. After marriage, no questions.

So, Sahaj Marg is a marriage of the hearts. Love means it is a sort of a marriage. "Having seen him I never saw anything else," Babuji Maharaj said of Lalaji Maharaj. Same they say in the Ramayan of Kamban in South India, where they introduce a poetic element – that she is on a balcony and therefore demurely looking down as a women should, and he as a *veerya*, Rajput warrior, looking up like this always, *gambheera* [bold]. And their vision met each other. This is a poetic humbug. Because normally a boy and a girl are not supposed to look at each other's eyes like that. But they did and in Tamil they said, "*Kanden, kanden,*" et cetera. ("I saw him and I was conquered.") "I came, I saw, I conquered." However it may happen, happen it must; happen once and happen forever. Once Dr. Radhakrishnan – I used to be very friendly with him when he was Vice Chancellor in Benaras – he wrote in one of my books, "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds." "No, no sir, I used to love my wife when she was young and beautiful. Now you see ..." So you did not love your wife; you loved a beautiful girl.

Similarly, "No, no what is this Babuji Maharaj?" I have known people criticizing him for so many things; and those who were closest to him were most critical. I remember once he was very sick in one place of Karnataka, and I came and I found he had to be lifted and put on the toilet which was a hole in the ground. Jahagirdar and I did it. Outside they were having *mehfil* [get-together], laughter, jokes, eating lunch. I said, "Brother what is this?" He said, "This is all drama. How can God be sick?" I was shocked to the core. Apparent *bhaktas* [devotees], apparently in central region – "How can God be sick?" "Yes, but don't you see he is sick?" "No, no, brother that is all drama for our benefit. These are tests for us." I went back to Hyderabad after three days. I heard the same story there from another very senior prefect. I said, "Why don't you bring him and take him to Delhi for treatment?" because I could not do it. I had no courage in those days to lift him physically, put him in my car, and take him away. I was in what I called then, in those days, enemy territory. Forgive me for the use of that word, but it was like that. I was not allowed to stay there. I had to stay in some *choultry* [rest house] somewhere. Otherwise I would have lifted him and taken him away. And he would have been very happy. There also I heard the same story in Hyderabad. "No, no, brother, this is your spiritual immaturity which is speaking." You know, apparent humility, that man, "This is your spirituality immaturity, brother, that is speaking. He is God. How can he be sick?" I said, God, help these people! After all when He comes, He comes in the physical form; there is a body. Otherwise why should he eat? Even half a roti, quarter, or one-eighth of a roti, he has no business to eat. He ate. He needed water. He had to spit. He had to go to the toilet. He had nightmares in the night.

One moment he is sick, next moment he is like a *kalyana purusha* [bridegroom] waiting to go out. He was like the weather in the tropical climates. I have seen him almost on his death bed, one instant. We were in Switzerland. He was extremely ill. I cancelled all plans. I telephoned Denmark and said, "We go back to India," and he agreed. Three doctors came and they told me, "We hope you are able to take him back alive to India because he is not in a state in which he can be moved. And if he lives here, he will not continue to live." Three doctors – eminent doctors. Next morning with great love he calls me: "A*aj hame kahaan jaana hai*? [Where should we go today?]" I said, "*Kahin nahin jaana hai. Hum to Bharat ja rahe hain.* [We don't have to go anywhere. We are going to India.]" *"Dekho, tum naraaz to nahin ho gaye humse?* [You have not become angry with me, have you?]" *"Nahin, sahab, kya naraaz* *baar-baar poochte hain aap? Pareshaan zaroor hoon.* [No, no sir, why do you ask again and again if I am angry? I am definitely worried]." He said, *"Dekho zindagi aur maut Ishwar ke hath mein hai. Ab koi nahin jaanta hai ab yahaan phir vaapas aayenge ki nahin. To is baar hame apna kaam karne do.* [Life and death are in God's hands. We do not know if we will ever come back here, so let me finish my work this time.]" I reinstated all the plans. Poray had left the previous day. The next morning all the programme was cancelled. The following morning we were in France with Babuji in his resplendent whites, with a beautiful smile on his face, captivating, as they describe of the Lord, and Poray was terribly angry with me. He said, "You are a stupid fellow. You are this, you are that." He used all the terms that he can use. He said, "You are liar. You told me yesterday that Babuji is sick. Where is he sick?"

So to look after him was a danger in itself – because all the barbs, as they say in Shakespeare, 'the barbs of outrageous fortune.' But it provided a good training for me, because after his *mahasamadhi* [final samadhi, when a saint renounces his body and enters the brighter world], I needed even better *kavaccha* [armour] and he was the kavaccha. None of you can even *imagine* the moments of darkness and despair that I have experienced after he left. And I must also tell you, to my shame, that the first time I was to give a sitting after his mahasamadhi, I said, "Will it work or not? Now he is no more here." Peter denied his Master thrice. Of course I denied once. I said, "Will it work or not?" Then I said, "I will sit down and see," and it worked. Like the Brahmastra, you cannot use it once to test its efficacy and then use it again. You use it or you don't use. You believe in the Brahmastra and use it, or you just say throw it away. There is no time for trial and reuse. You cannot test a weapon. We are not in the military of the Government of India. We are in the armed forces of my Lord. He says, "Transmit," you transmit. "Can I transmit?" Well, when he says, "Do it," do it. We always want to prove ourselves to ourselves that this will work, because we are worried about our success. When I am not worried about success or failure because they are two things of the same coin, two sides – he says, "Transmit," I transmit. He says, "Sit down," I sit down. He says, "Eat," I eat. He says, "Fast," I fast. No questions. Why? He knows. What for? He knows. Who is to do it? I am to do it. So, *sharanaagati* [surrender] is one word, but it embraces a whole basket full of attitudes that are essential, and the easiest way, the way that I adopted, I go on doing His work, and it is going on working. That is all that I know. I work, it works. If I don't work, nothing works.

So I pray to my Master that you will all have the good sense to keep on working. Don't look at circumstances, don't look at people; don't look at anything else. "He says," "She says," "They say," – let them do it. I have my work, and like the steam engine in the darkness my headlight is on, and I move.

Thank you.

9

Truth and Non-Violence

Our respectful obeisance to Acharya Shri Maha Pragyaji, my pranams to all elders here, respects to Dr. Radhakrishnan and affectionate regards to my sister Sudhamahi, at whose invitation I am here. This is an apparently easy topic – this question of violence in language, violence in speech, because superficially it is very easy. *Ahimsa paramo dharmaha* [non-violence is the highest virtue], says the Shastra. But when we look around, it would appear that without violence there is no life at all. I am not trying to controvert anybody's philosophy or way of thinking, I am only projecting what I have learnt from my own spiritual master, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur, under whom I have been learning and practising a particular form of yoga for almost forty years now. Acharya Maha Pragyaji used the word *santulan*, which in my guruji's teaching means balance. And this question of balance seems to be of paramount importance whether in a citizen's individual life or society's life or in the very life of the cosmos. Individually, we are all duty bound to perfect ourselves through yoga, through

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3 March 2002, Chennai, India

discipline, through education, through listening to the words of others, not forgetting that listening is not enough, application is necessary – *shravana*, *manana, nididhyaasana* [listen, reflect, meditate].

We are all very happy to listen to the great words, or what we think are great words, but we don't brood on the meaning; and even more importantly, we don't apply. "*Satyam vada* [speak the truth]." We see this everywhere in India – satyam vada. People say "But how can I tell the truth? I cannot exist if I tell the truth." It is a problem in today's society of an existential situation where truth does not prevail. That truth will eventually prevail – my cousin for instance who is a big man in a corporate company, he would say, "Yes, but *Paachu Anna,* [Paachu brother] when? After I am dead?" You tell the politicians of today, "Be truthful, be honest, give good government to the people who have elected you," and they will say, "Yes Mr. Rajagopalachari, but my first consideration is to last long enough to be able to do good." I have heard this ad nauseam from politicians at all levels in India, of all colours, of all ilks. In my travels I meet everybody, anybody, everywhere, and this is a standard answer to truth and non-violence. Somebody even once suggested to me, with respect to my friend Dr. Radhakrishnan, that when we polarise too much on peace, the opposite comes.

Nature is a play of opposites. Nature cannot exist without the interplay of opposites – *satyam, asatyam*, isn't it? *Tamasaha; tamaso maa jyotirgamaya*; *asato maa satgamaya*; *mrityor maa amrutamgamaya.* [Darkness;

lead me from darkness to light; lead me from un-truth to truth; lead me from death to life.] Why all these prayers? "From one, lead me to the other." And then comes that famous statement of Krishna: "Rise beyond the opposites! In this world, Arjuna, the opposites are there. The *dvandvas* are a fact of life. *Dvandva-ateetah vimatsarah*" – coming from the Gitacharya himself, the *yuga-purusha* who is supposed to be in-charge of the current yuga – the kaliyuga. We must give due weight to Krishna's saying that you can rise beyond the opposites, but you cannot reconcile the opposites. If there is too much talk of peace – there is too much violence, non-peace. If there is too much violence – peace results after it. And then you have people, like the president of the US, who say this is the war to end all wars. This has been repeatedly heard from presidents of aggressive nations who want to be at the top of the power ladder – that this is the war to end wars, and the next war will be the final war to end all wars, and the one will follow after that, that is the culminating war to finish all wars.

In nature we see violence. I saw a picture called *Twister*. You know this whirlwind – suddenly it springs up, nobody knows from where. And there is a huge column, thirty thousand feet, forty thousand feet of a whirlwind taking up everything in its path: trees, cars, houses, people, huge tractors, trailers – mindless violence, senseless violence, purposeless violence. I am using these words deliberately, because my master distinguished between the forces of nature which we call violent. But they are not violent in themselves, they are just adjustments to bring about balance where unbalance has been created. For instance, by the sun's heat, which takes up the hot air rising and creating a vacuum, in rushes air to fill in that vacuum. And this is a continuous process worldwide, on a global scale, and you cannot prevent it. Because if you prevent it – and there is what you call unity of existence in that sense, a constant temperature, no pressure differences – there would be no life. You know in physics they have this concept of entropy, and when entropy is maximised there is no life. It is called a cold death. The universe will die a cold death, is the prediction of scientists, Nobel laureates.

So there are two powers which have to operate: male and female, good and evil, holy and unholy, God and the devil, if you will; though Hinduism does not subscribe to such a thing as a devil but God and un-god, godly and un-godly. So there is this constant need to restore balance. This is a cosmic scale phenomenon. It also seems to matter at the global scale: national, social, societal. Something happens somewhere and something is burnt in Godhra; in retaliation for that something else happens in the whole of Gujarat. Isn't it? Last year's Gujarat earthquake – plate tectonics according to the geologists, adjustment of the inner crust of the earth, who can prevent it? You call it violence. I would not call it violence at all. It's an adjustment. If you climb up a staircase made of wood and if the house is old, half an hour after you are in bed you hear creaking, as if somebody is climbing the steps because the pressure of your foot on each step of the staircase has depressed it, and that wood is relaxing itself from that pressure.

So, this is not a very easy subject. It is not an easy subject at all. And I hope you gentlemen will deal with it in the proper sense, without politicising it and taking refuge under this political figure or that political figure and statements of religion and statements of *maha-gurus*. We all wish for peace on Earth. If we did not, there would be no blessing. May there be peace. *Om shanti, shanti, shanti* is what we end with in all our rituals. If there were peace, we don't need to say blessings and peace. Isn't it? We always bless something which is not, which we wish ardently is, towards which we have to strive.

Now I will come to the important role that individuals have to play. Because peace as a social phenomenon, peace as a cosmic phenomenon – I think we are looking for dreams, realisation of dreams, unless and until the individual human being is transformed. You know I am reminded when we had this … I am a Brahmin, Vaishnava Brahmin by birth, and we have this ritualistic cleaning in the morning during *sandhyaa vandanam* [prayers offered at dawn]: *suryascha maa manyuscha manyupatayascha manyukritebhyah, paapebhyo rakshantaam, yadraatryaa paapamakaarsham, manasaa vaachaa hastaabhyaam, padbhyaam udarena sisnaa* – six things. This is a human situation, where the human being in the morning says, with a little water in his hand praying to lord Surya, "O God Surya! O Surya Deva! O the power of your Surya's *kiran*, your rays! Purify this water, so that the sins that I have performed in the night, committed in the night – *yadraatryaa paapamakaarsham; manasaa* – with the mind ..." It starts with the mind. Our ancient seers were great psychologists. Everything originates in the mind. Then, "*Vaachaa hastaabhyaam padbhyaam udarena sisnaa* [speech, hands, feet, stomach and the organ of sex]" — forget the rest.

Nobody did good by giving physical training. You cannot train a human being not to use his arms and legs in violence by giving him physical training. Sexual violence cannot be prevented by offering sex education in schools or preaching morality. We have seen all this in the last thirty to forty years after World War II. High tech criminals are the order of the day. I was reading an article about some criminal tribe which used to rob trains. And they had the dharma that they would rob only after sunrise and before sunset. And then, when the British came and introduced trains, they started robbing at night – dharma gone.

You read the war of the Kauravas and Pandavas. On day one, Bhishma stipulated so many stipulations. How *dharma yuddha* [war to uphold righteous principles] should be fought, as if *yuddha* can be *dharma* or *dharmic*. And day two, there was no dharma. Everybody bewailed. The greatest acharyas like Drona and Bhishma were party to this sin of *adharmic* [non-righteous] conduct, on the war field. Even Lord Krishna at one stage was almost provoked into taking up his *chakra* [celestial discus]. And his disciple, his bhakta who Krishna himself says, "You are dearer to me than anything else, so Arjuna I am revealing my cosmic form to you" – even Krishna was about to take up his chakra when Arjuna says, "What is this Lord, you too?" "*Et tu, Brute*? (You too, Brutus?]"

So, you see, God in human form, avatara, is not free of the *kleshas* [afflictions], the *dvandvas* [dualities] of existence. Do you think Krishna was fair in his conduct? Don't think I am preaching. I am only posing questions before you because you all have to answer these questions among yourselves, give the future talks. I am supposed to only give you a direction, an indication of the way we can think about these subjects.

In my personal spiritual life, the greatest confusion has been by reading the Mahabharata – highest preaching, lowest practice. At no stage do you get a clear intention or a clear indication or a clear instruction from that famous Gitacharya Lord Krishna about what you should do. Arjuna again and again, "Lord, what should I do?" "That, Arjuna, you have to decide. I can only tell you that if you want to kill Drona, you have to shoot him now when he is on the ground." "But that is not right, Krishna." "Are you here to win the war or are you here to preach about right and wrong?" I mean read the Gita for yourself – I am not exaggerating, I am not talking nonsense. "Shoot Bhishma, you put Shikandi in here and shoot" – I mean what is all this tamasha?

What is this tamasha, where you have the Lord himself, in his greatest avatara, *poorna avatara* [perfect incarnation]? Lord Krishna, a son of the Indian soil, this great land where avatars are born, *karma bhoomi* [land of action] – "

[to the south of the Meru Mountain is the land of Bharata]" – don't forget your sandhya vandanam and your *sankalpa* [inner resolve]. And here in Kurukshetra, "*Dharmakshetre kurukshetre samavetaa yuyutsavah* [In the field of Dharma, in Kurukshetra, gathered together wishing to fight]." Where is dharma kshetra? So, Lord Krishna seems to say, "You as an individual, Arjuna, you are dear to me. With the Pandavas, I have to do nothing. Of course they are my sister's sons." And he plays with this, what shall we say, balancing act. "One will have *me*; the other will have everything I have." Duryodhana is satisfied with that, Arjuna is satisfied with this, and the great war comes to a culmination and the great Mahabharata war is over, and we are all left struggling to find out who did right, when, where, if at all. All violence! Violence in thought first; starting with Duryodhana, from childhood refusing to accept that anybody would be king other than himself, desire-based. As the Gita again says, from unfulfilled desire comes anger; from that anger comes *smriti vibhramaha* [loss of memory]. Corruption of your mental way of thinking – from that comes *buddhi naashah*. Your intellect fails, your wisdom fails, and then what happens to such a man? *Buddhi naashaat pranashyati* – he is destroyed.

So we destroy ourselves by our individual conduct starting from desire. Therefore the Buddha said, cut the chain of desire. Where? He said it does not matter. If there is a bucket elevator or escalator, cut it anywhere and the whole thing falls. Don't start with the most difficult thing; start with the easiest. Because wherever you cut it, it is gone. Why do you want to tackle big things, like a man who says... Incidentally, one of my Master's teaching was, if you want to tell the truth and you want to make a New Year resolution, don't say, "From tomorrow I will tell no lies." Because the mind is on lies: "I will not tell lies, I will not tell lies," and that gains importance. The mental emphasis is on lying rather than on the truth. So say, "From tomorrow I speak truth" – the right way of making resolutions.

Now we have this philosophy in India, or at least my Master used to emphasise this, that in the whole world if there is one saint of calibre, it is enough to, sort of, suck out all the opposing forces into himself. But, like one little lamp and the darkness is destroyed, you don't need twenty thousand watts of light – a simple candle. But again, as my Master emphasised, it has to burn itself to provide the light, like a candle must burn itself to provide the light. Saints must be willing to give themselves, often their lives, in the task of regenerating humanity, rejuvenating dharma. And in the Gita there is one lesson which I have got for myself, I don't know if it is right because I am not a scholar. The question of destroying the evil-doer, restoring dharma and protecting the good, is His, not ours. "*Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavati ...*" that famous sloka. Let us leave to God what his functions are. "Revenge is mine saith the Lord," says Christianity. But we are here interacting at the... as the

Acharya just said on the video presentation, we want revenge at individual levels, village levels, political party levels, religious levels." Where are we going? *Quo vadis domine?* Where are we going? Where are we heading?

We are a very politically self-satisfied country, because America, in its wicked wisdom, calls us the greatest democracy in the world and we are happy. We are like the Bandar Log [monkeys] in *The Jungle Book* of Kipling. We are great, because we say so. We Indians are a stupid race who have not recognised our own stupidity, how we are fighting among ourselves, how we are destroying this country by self-indulgence, avariciousness, grasping politically, materially, power-wise. Yet there is a ray of hope, because there are people like Acharya Shri Maha Pragyaji, Dr. Radhakrishnan, my sister here. Because without that ray of hope there would not be seminars on, let us say, violence in speech, violence in conduct.

The onus, my dear sisters and brothers, ladies and gentlemen, friends, invitees, eminent people, is on the individual. Society cannot change unless individuals change. How can individuals change? I come back to this *suryascha maa manyuscha...* mantra. Every morning and evening that ritual says: I clean myself – *yadraatryaa paapamakaarsham manasaa vaachaa hastaabhyaam padbhyaam udarena sisnaa,* and then, *surye jyotishi juhomi svaahaa* [I am offering in the divine light of the Sun]. And in the evening: *satye jyotishi juhomi svaahaa* [I am offering in the divine light of Truth].

In our system of yoga, which I practice under my guru's guidance, rituals have been abandoned because rituals are superficial. We go into a yogic system of cleaning where we sit in the evening, imagine the guru's grace flowing through us, removing the day's accumulation of both good and bad impressions. Remember this – if you take away from the *taraazu* [weighing scale] something, you cannot have balance. Either take away from both or add to both. Balance must be maintained; that's a law of nature. So in our cleaning, good and bad both are thrown away. Impressions – because our philosophy says that every thought, every action that we indulge in leaves an impression on the mind, which impression becomes a sort of a foundation for future activity. And as these impressions are deepened, so that samskaras, as we call them, are deepened, it becomes for me an established pattern of behaviour.

I would hazard an opinion that if you were to go to Godhra or Gujarat or wherever and ask the Hindus who are killing the Muslims and the Muslims who have been killing the Hindus, how they feel today, they would probably weep. Nobody intended it. I refer to the mindless, senseless, purposeless violence of nature, where nature has no mind; it is not purposefully bent on destroying half of Seattle in a rage. But we take refuge again in another mantra – once a year we repeat when we change our *yajnopaveetam* [sacred thread]. It's called the Kaamo Kaarsheet mantra where in Sanskrit we say, "I did not do it. My body did it, my desires did it; my anger did it." But this must be a sincere statement where a human being is able to isolate himself from this Self. Where he must have already achieved a certain level of, shall we say, spiritual maturity to distinguish that this body is not I, I am something inside – what we call the *antaryaamin*, the spark of divinity that exists in my heart, and which is the true Self, but which unfortunately is covered over by the grossness that the soul has accumulated. And it is that grossness which impels us, compels us, to patterns of activity from which there is no escape.

I was brought up in Jabalpur, way back in the '30s. There was this Hindu Muslim senseless violence, every *Bakrid* [Islamic festival of sacrifice], every *Moharram* [Islamic New Year Day], every Krishna *Janmaashtami* [birthday of Lord Krishna] and then two days later they are embracing each other, weeping with each other, hugging each other, "*Id Mubarak* [May the festival be blessed], Id Mubarak."

So you see this violence is not something forethought. Today, unfortunately, we have politicians and political leaders who are creating havoc in this country using these powerful forces over which they themselves have no control. The Babri Masjid, shameful episode. As somebody has written in the newspaper yesterday, very boldly, I should say, we are no better than the Taliban which destroyed the Bamiyan Buddha. We have no respect for archaeology, no respect for age, no respect for tradition, no respect for anything. Muslim names, if it is changed to Hindus – what does it matter, the road suddenly becomes wonderful? Are we not shameless people who are using all these gimmicks to fool our people who are gullible, who are uneducated? And are we not supine, a useless spineless race who use our own selfishness in casting our votes – religion, community, caste? You will never get a good government because, as the old saying goes, you get the government that you deserve. Here again the onus is on *individual action*. People don't go to vote. They say my one vote is not going to matter. Yes, it will matter if everybody votes.

So my dear friends, ladies, gentlemen, sisters, brothers, individual change and transformation is the only solution to bring about, at some time, societal, global and cosmic transformation. We have to create the world anew, time to time, generation to generation. This is not something which the father can do for his son and the son do for his son and showcase. It's not like that. A cleaner Madras means citizens of Madras have to keep the city clean. You go to our beaches – they are scandalous; rubbish bins! So you see it is all right to talk of *ahimsa* [non-violence]. I am a great *ahimsaavaadi* myself; I try to avoid violence myself. But just to emphasise, I must tell you again, even the act of procreation is filled with violence. I am not talking of the violence of rape. I am talking of the violence in the marital conjugal bed. So much talk about erectile dysfunction and Viagra. Because without that violence, that act is impossible.

I hope I am not giving an impression that I am bit flippant or anything like that. I am a very serious man; but we have to realise that by preaching, by writing slogans on the wall – slogans on the wall only betray our own vulnerability. Like I am always saying – "Do not spit" you see in your train compartments, it means we are a nation of spitters. "Satyam Vada" means we are a nation of liars, and this has been going on for centuries, from the time of the Vedas. Where have we changed? When have we changed? And we talk glibly of Europe having been animals in the Middle Ages and we were already a civilised nation. Where is that civilisation? Was it there then? Is it there today? And what is more pertinent: Will it be there in the future?

I exhort all of you to carry the message of individual responsibility not only for your individual lives, individual success, individual power, individual prestige – but hand over this power, prestige, money to a national image. That, if I behave as I should, if my behaviour is dharmic, if I am indeed practising something and which I have the energy and the right and, shall we say, the courage to preach, I must hand over all these things to a power greater than myself, which is what surrender means. Surrender means nothing more, nothing less than giving up everything to a superior force, seeking its guidance and understanding that, as Arjuna says, "*Chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramaathi balavat dridham.*" – Arjuna says thousands of years ago: "My mind is fickle. How to bring it into order?" and Krishna says, "Abhyas" – practice.

Education creates better and better criminals, more and more weaponry, bigger and bigger wars and destruction on cosmic scales which we are yet to see.

I hope not, God forbid. Education is not the answer. Moral preaching has not been the answer, because we find everything everywhere you see. People in the highest positions are the most corrupt. In fact, instead of Divinity coming from above below, corruption is coming from above below in our land. Because of the need for electoral funds, fifty crores, five hundred crores, it scales down: state head, district head, taluk head, panchayat head, grassroots – the famous term of politicians today, grassroots. Collect the roots of the grass and bring it to me. Suitcases have become familiar, stuffed with today thousand rupee notes, I suppose.

So, moral education is not enough. We have to instil moral values, practice, and as my Guruji Maharaj, to whom my respects I offer every moment of my life, said, "You can only teach by example." If you have no courage, if you have no guts, if you have no ability to become what you tell others to become, you will not succeed in your work. You have to be an example. If the father tells the son, when there is a telephone call, "Daddy, daddy, there is a phone call," and he says, "Tell him I am not at home, I am busy," you have created a liar in your son. There are other ways: "Tell him I am busy," or "Tell him I will not receive the call." Of course, there are dangers in such a situation – like in Caesar's life, Caesar says, "I cannot come to the Senate," when Cassius calls him. He says, "But what reason shall I offer, Caesar?" Julius Caesar says, "I *will* not come." He got into deep trouble. Of course, we will also get into trouble.

You want to lead trouble-free lives? You cannot lead a trouble-free life in a troubled world. You cannot confine yourself within the four walls of your home, with or without guards' men with guns, and expect to be peaceful when the world is seething with unrest and turmoil. Outside peace means inside peace – in social life, in material life, in human life. In the spiritual way it's different, inner peace means outer peace.

So, not to take up more of your valuable time, I exhort you to think that individually we have to bring this inner peace into each of our hearts so that we will project this wherever we go. At the same time, we have social responsibilities, which we must not neglect under the pretext of being saints and great souls and go around preaching. That is not enough; we have a duty to ourselves, to society, to the human race, to the universe. Of that duty I wish to remind all of you.

I hope all of you will be able to rise to the situation, because India is in a very bad state. To say that the world is in a bad state is of no meaning because, as my Guruji said, if you have one boil and it is full of pus it's enough to cause you sleepless nights full of pain. One family member is sick – the whole family is in turmoil, isn't it? One person dies of plague in a village and its national news! Remember that there can be no individual peace, no individual contentment in a social way, in a familial way except through national health, national security, national well-being. For the yogi it's a different matter. May they ever be with us, guide our footsteps and bless us.

Thank you!

10

Listen, Reflect, Meditate

There used to be a saying in my grandmother's day when we tell children that as you grow, the house must grow with you, the family must grow with you. Not to build a big house and have one child in it, but to have a small house and go on adding rooms, then shifting to a bigger house, shifting to the biggest and things like that. So I am happy to see that as we grow, we are having more and more people, at least willing to listen, if not… It has been our endeavour always to get people with a certain sense of prior commitment, to at least listen carefully to what is being said. In Shri Ram Chandra Mission we don't have public meetings. Because in public meetings people come who have nothing else to do, sit down – some sit for ten minutes, some sit for three minutes, some sit for forty minutes and they keep coming and going and it disturbs even the serious people. So in Sahaj Marg we don't have public meetings at all.

So we have these in-house meetings, what we call open house, where there are abhyasis with their friends, with their relatives, who hopefully will listen.

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6 March 2002, Chennai, India

In yoga there are three steps: *shravana* [listen], *manana* [reflect], *nididhyaasanam* [meditate]. The first step is to listen. Those who are unwilling to listen are not going to participate in any measure. Even if it is a small political discussion at home over the newspaper, and somebody says, "Yes, yes, I know. Don't read it for heaven's sake. BJP – I know what they will say." So such people have their ears closed. And often I am reminded of this Chinese monkey: "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil", and whether we are not interpreting it in India as see nothing, hear nothing, speak nothing. Often such people pass for wise people, because it is when you open your mouth that you can become a fool. Silent people, they often get away with the reputation (I don't know whether it is well-founded or ill-founded) for wisdom; because they say nothing, they grin, they look wise, they don't even nod their heads to give an opinion. They are silent, benevolent, quiet. And of course we have this Sanskrit justification: *maunam sarvaartha saadhakam* [silence gains all ends].

So everything is capable of interpretation in two ways: the monkey with eyes, and ears and mouth closed can be that speak no evil, see no evil, hear no evil; it can also be that I don't see anything, hear nothing, see nothing, because if I do already there is a commitment. If you are going by car and you see a man beating his wife, or an accident, generally people tend to look the other way round, because if you see, whether you like it or not, your heart is impacted. The tendency is to stop. But people tell you, "Don't be a damn fool, don't stop, because if you stop, you are involved." So when you listen, when you see, there is implicit, natural, a tendency to commit yourself to what you have seen, to what you have heard. And, of course, if you speak you are committed totally. I try to be wise and not to speak, because as president of the Mission if I say something, it becomes a commitment. Suppose I say that I will give you a sitting, it becomes a commitment. Even my poor abhyasis don't remember that as abhyasis, they are committed. If a prefect says, "Come to me tomorrow morning, I will give you a sitting," he is committed. Later on they cannot say, "No, no, I told you to come but I am a little busy; can you come tomorrow morning?"

My Master was once very annoyed when a prefect sent away an abhyasi in the evening, saying he was tired. He said no human being has a right to say, "Come tomorrow." Only God has. And he explained, "God knows who will be here tomorrow morning. No human being can say with conviction that he will be here tomorrow morning – nobody, not even a baby just born, not an old man of ninety, nothing in between. People are here one moment, next moment they are gone. So how on earth can we say come tomorrow or come day after tomorrow?" So, the spoken word is a big commitment, and of course the written word – that's why agreements are written and typed and signed and sealed and delivered and registered.

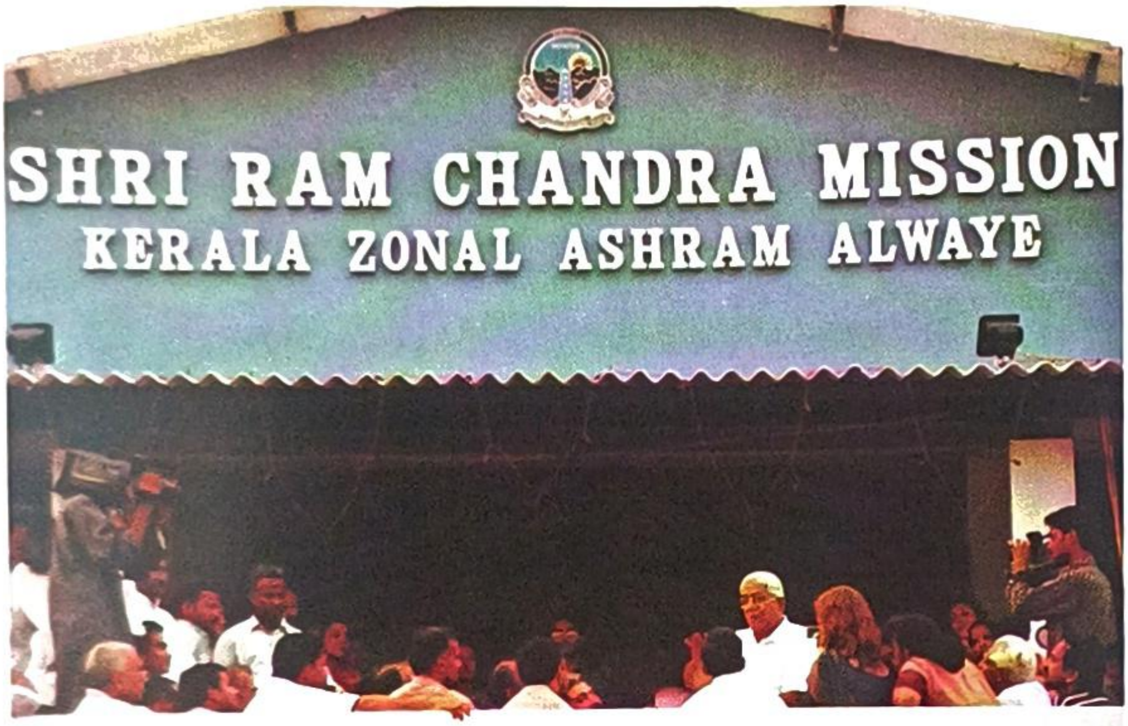
So to come back to you all who are willing to listen, I am happy because to me it indicates a certain degree of commitment to listen to what this old fellow has to say. We have heard so much before. Is there anything new that he is going to say? Is there something that is going to, sort of, pull us towards the system, make us enthusiastic to pursue yoga for a change? Because, after all, you must remember you are in an export promotion zone where the emphasis is not only on production, but on your personal futures. If the business man, moneyed man, talks of futures, it is a gamble. Cotton futures – "What will this commodity sell at six months later?" So you buy a future, let us say, in oil seeds or cotton or I don't know what – wheat, and gamble. Let me assure you that when you think of your own personal future in your profession, in your job, it is also a gamble. The average human being who has no interest in self-evolution – evolution meaning something other than growth, a baby grows but the human being must evolve. If a human being does not evolve, he stagnates whatever be his income.

A man who is a billionaire but has no idea of self-development in human values, in human tendencies, is as ignorant, as stupid as a man on the street pulling a rickshaw. That he is a billionaire doesn't matter, he is only a rich idiot. We have poor idiots, we have sick idiots, we have healthy idiots; but idiots they all are. You know in Tamil – I suppose most of you understand Tamil, when I used to be young, we used to say *panchaaksharam* [five letters]. "*Avan* panchaakshram [He is a panchaaksharam]" – that means I D I O T – five. Of course, if people didn't know the secret of the Tamil language, they said, "Om Namah Shi va yah or Na ma chi va ya" – panchaaksharam. So today there is this tendency that prosperous youngsters picked up from what you call campus selection are paid lavishly. We are doing an injustice to them, disservice to them because they think they already own the world, that they are all potential Bill Gates. In the next three years, if not in the next five years, if not in the next seven years, they hope to make it – Fortune-500 list first, then the list of millionaires, hundred millionaires in India, and then possibly the world millionaires too.

Today a successful man is thought of as a rich man, only richness is success. If you make money you are successful. If you make money you are capable. If you make money you even get away with a reputation for being wise, I mean how can a fool make money, isn't it? No rich man wants to think he is a fool because after making money you want to appear to be rich. That is why rich people I am told, all over the world, they buy lovely bookcases of oak, walnut, and leatherbound copies of the classics, and they line them up for people to see. They never touch them; neither do their children. It is there to give a reputation, "Oh! They must be...! Herman Melville! Moby-Dick!" Things like that, and of course they have stacks of records which they never listen to. If you tell him Brahms, he will confuse it with Brahma, you say Brahma he will put on a Brahms record.

So once we become or we have a reputation for achievement... modern awards are achievement awards; somebody achieved target for growth, somebody achieved the target for super-growth. And as they say in America, I want next year's sale this year and this year I want it yesterday, not today. It's a famous Americanism. So young friends, young ladies, young gentlemen, most of you are young, let us not be seduced by this idea of success through wealth. We are all exposed to the American psychology that nothing succeeds like success. Everybody claps their hands and "Wonderful, wonderful! What a wise saying." After all nothing succeeds like success, of course. It is like saying there is no accident like an accident. Of course, it is self-evident. But when you talk of nothing succeeds like success, it is as if you have taken one of these pep pills. You are sleepy and you have taken a pep pill and you can keep awake for fourteen hours or more, sit before the computer and play games.

I have worked in offices with computers, and if somebody is before the computer screen for fifteen hours, I think three hours are productive. The rest is chit-chat, I don't know what programmes they call it – chit-chatting, exchanging pleasantries, making illegal telephone calls over the internet. Spreading your wings as it were, to feel your freedom, which the new computer age and the computer technology has bestowed you with. And then such people get married and they go home at two o'clock in the morning and their wives are miserable. Because the seduction of the computer, I am sorry to say this in the presence of women – today women don't seem to be as seductive as computers. They have lost their charm. They don't have the ability to bring their husbands home; at least, not after the honeymoon. I am telling you what I have observed. I am an observer. I am not an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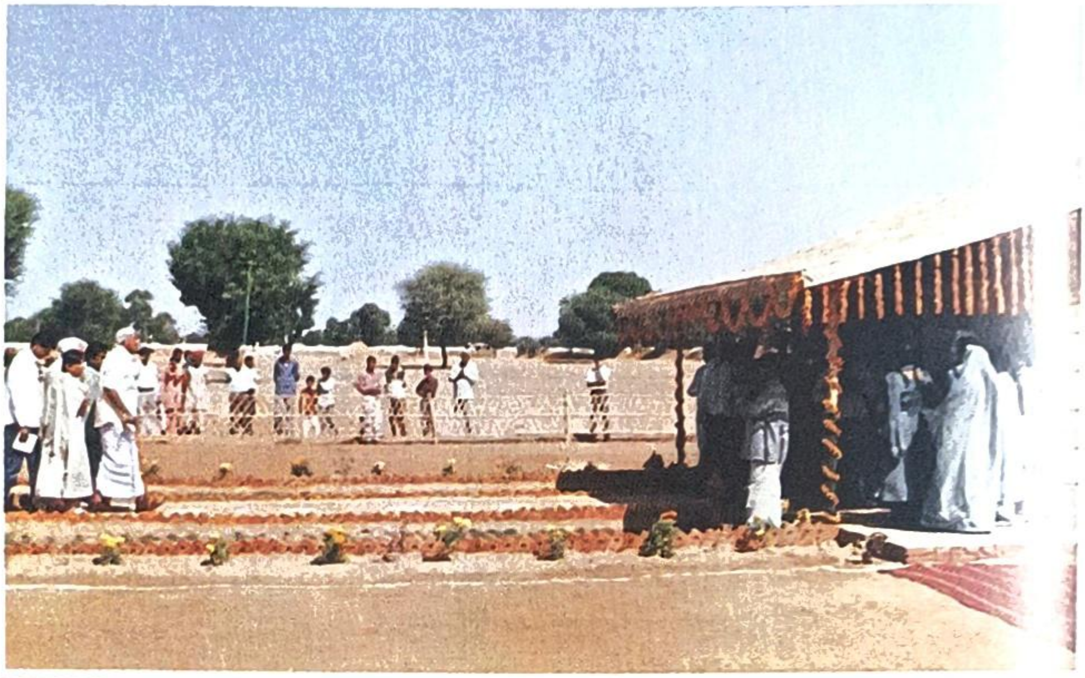

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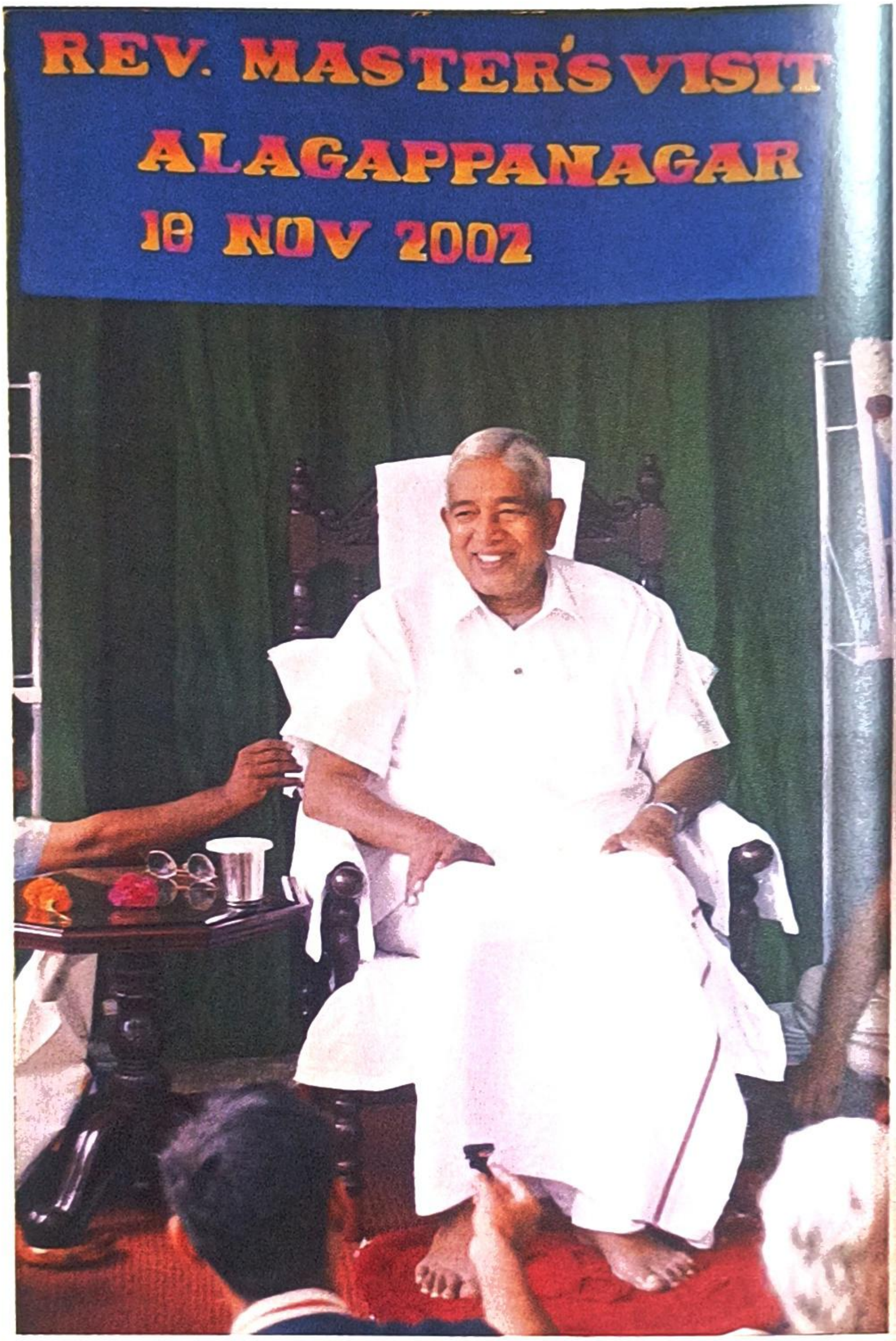
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educated man, I am not a wise man, but I observe life, and these are my observations. And until they get migraine, acidity, because the syndrome… you see. In the old days you had TV dinners at home watching the television. Today, they have I suppose, computer dinners – sitting before the screen, using one hand to tap out something, munching a sandwich. Who cares for yoga?

So it is really encouraging to find so many people here. I remember in Babuji's first visit to the US, I accompanied him. We were in the US for about, I think six weeks, I am not sure, and in one particular place which was widely advertised, they put what they call flyers and notices and distributed them in restaurants There were five people in a huge hall like this in a university. Babuji sitting on the table, our host who had arranged the meeting, and myself – only five people. So the organizer said, "Shall we wait fifteen minutes? Because this is a university town and students are late." So we waited fifteen minutes. Then Babuji said, "I think we can begin." I said, "Babuji, there are only five people." He said, "You have to say what you have to say whether it is five or five thousand. How does it make a difference to you?" Isn't it? I mean if you play a record, and five people listen or one man sits and listens or a whole hall full of people are listening, what difference does it make to the record?

So I learned from him that we have to develop in ourselves – my-self for instance – first of all, the ability to see an audience where none exists, by imagining that hall will be filled in the future, making a will to that effect and *voila!* as the French say, it happens. It may take twenty years, but it happens. It is like a bank account. Every bank account is zero when you start; you put five pounds, ten pounds, two hundred francs, and if people are working in the United Nations and banks and whatnot, they slowly find the bank account filling up. Then you say such a man has a 'fat bank account' and it becomes fatter and fatter. And sometimes the man is dead but the account is fat. Often for such people they also become fat and the account is fat. Why I am telling you this is because we have to make a strong will power, use our will power with strength that *today I have come here to listen and listen I shall*, because that is the first step in yoga, *shravana*.

The second step is *manana* – to think over, to meditate on what I have heard. India is full of people who are lecturing and it is fuller of people who are listening but not listening. And it is not peculiar to India, because even in the Bible it says, "Ye have ears but ye hear not." What a tragic statement that God gives you a pair of ears and you come, you sit, you listen but you are not really listening because your thoughts are elsewhere. Until you listen, you have nothing to think over and meditate upon. I have been to several talks in my pre-Sahaj Marg days when I was a student, by eminent speakers in the religious field. Few listened, the rest were chit-chatting, worrying about their *chappals* [slippers]. Some even brought their chappals into the temples in bags! Even today I find it happening. They are more worried about their chappals than about the lecture. The lecture is about elevation of the soul and we are talking of preserving the sole. One is S O U L and one is S O L E.

So, you see how mundane our thoughts become even when we go for elevation, spiritual elevation, intellectual stimulation, knowledge expansion. So, "Ye have ears but ye hear not." First, let us open our ears. In Hindi there is a saying "*Kaan kholke suno.*" The Hindi people are very adept at emphasis. Kaan kholke suno – open your ears wide and listen, don't just superficially pretend. Most of us reading the newspaper don't read the newspaper – we are smelling the rasam cooking in the kitchen, the dog barking outside. "See who is there at the gate! *Rasam pongarthu di, yeduthu vai* [the rasam is boiling over, keep it aside]," and the newspaper is in the hand. So we have to learn to listen and listening is an art. In India we are par excellence talkers. I won't say speakers, because speaking is a different connotation. We like to go on talking, talking, talking, whether it's in the train, in the bus. And unless you have learnt and, if possible, mastered the art of listening, you are going to learn nothing. I repeat, unless you are able to cultivate the habit of listening, if possible master it, you are not going to learn anything. Remember you are all, most of you are technologists, highly qualified, highly paid, but your expansion is all like this – horizontal expansion. Making money doesn't mean vertical expansion, it is only horizontal expansion.

If you want vertical expansion, that is evolution – you must learn to listen, you must learn to think over what you have heard; and then comes the third step, *nididhyaasanam*, to make it yourself, make it part of yourself, digest that knowledge, digest that wisdom that you have heard. It is like food. You eat – if you eat, gulp down pizzas in chunks just like dogs do, you are going to have indigestion. If you chew it – after all God gave you thirty-two teeth and you are supposed to chew once for every tooth, thirty-two times, then the food is properly salivated and goes in prepared to be digested, it becomes part of you, healthy at least. So food has to be digested. There is a disease where people eat and it just passes out. The stomach doesn't retain it. The intestines don't retain it – it is not digested. And they become weaker and weaker, and in six months they are dead. Unfortunately, where this [the head] is concerned, this sort of disease doesn't exist. Unfortunately – because if it did exist, and we could just go on imbibing what we call information...

Today's information technology is not wisdom technology – [it is] more and more information. Everyday you get a newsletter from VSNL. Microsoft bombards you with new issues, releases, because they want to sell, they don't want to make you wiser. On the contrary, if you became wiser you won't buy, isn't it? Newer models, newer editions – MS Office 2000, MS Office 2001, MS Office 2002, improved version, patch, available online. Have you ever thought of what is happening to you all in this field of information technology and what you have succumbed to, and how nicely you have been enslaved? Because you are made to feel masters, where you are only slaves of information

– they tease you into more and more acquisition. Every morning in *The Hindu* [newspaper], if not every morning, every alternate morning, there is a beautiful Japanese girl holding up another palm top. One day it is Palm 5, another day it is Palm 7, third day it is Palm 14, I-Pac, Compaq, Ready Pac, Long Pac, name it, 'wolf-pack'. Every alternate day! Every fifth day, Canon is releasing a new digital camera. If there were not enough fools to buy them – I mean why do they make these products, isn't it? Do we need them? No! So people immediately say, "Aha! Canon has released an SQ367 model, 47 megapixels." We don't know what is a pixel, we don't know what is a megapixel – I mean, most us don't. I am willing to gamble on that. But we are willing to talk knowledgeably about megapixels. "What is a bit and what is a byte?" "Oh! He bit me and therefore it was a bite." "The dog also bites. But what is the difference?" "This is byte; that is bite." I mean most people don't know still!

We know enough to get by with our jobs, to earn more and more money based on a so-called performance appraisal, give ourselves a pat on the back, admiring wives at home, bigger and bigger bank deposits. And one day it all collapses. God forbid. So, shravana, manana, nididhyaasana. "I am here. What am I really doing? Have I acquired anything useful in my future?" Money, yes, everybody says it is useful in the future. But only this morning, or yesterday morning, I heard that Bill Gates is poorer by eight billion dollars. He hasn't lost anything. It is the valuation of his wealth, because it is all shares – pieces of paper, and if the stocks go down further he may be thirty-five billion poorer next year. And when it crashes you really come to know that you had nothing; it was all a sheet of paper, lovely printing, Gilt-Edged Security so-called. You look at the Unit Trust 1964 holders, US 64; where are we? I mean I am one of the scapegoats; Rajagopal here is another; because we are pensioners. We depended on these incomes. And to add insult to injury they are cutting interests. So how ephemeral or how substantial is what we are acquiring *here*, *here* and *here*.

We have acquisitions of three types: in the pocket, which I use for all material acquisitions. "I have it in my pocket, Sir" people say in Tamil Nadu at least, whether it is a promotion or a new order, or an enhancement of salary. "It's already in my pocket." Second one, here [head]. Is it only information or is there some knowledge or is there at least some wisdom associated with it? Only information! Because I am surrounded by computer technologists in my Mission – there are hundreds of them and I am an unlearned idiot. I operate a computer very happily, but if something goes wrong, I am flat. I am like one of these cinema actresses who drive a Cadillac and when there is a puncture she has to put up her thumb and get four people to change the tire. Once, I must have done something stupid – my screen went blank and I tapped every key because, I didn't know which to tap, so tap everything – in the old Shakespearean tradition that if you put a monkey before a typewriter for twenty years, it would type out all the sonnets of Shakespeare. So I tapped everything, nothing happened. Then I sent for one of my abhyasis, I called him up at the office, he came. It took him thirty-five minutes to realise that I had minimised the screen [laughter] by accident. He is an MCA!

So, I have not read a single manual, because when you go to the manuals, on page 4, they will say, "Make sure the battery is working. Replace batteries correctly. For proper positioning of batteries see page 44." You go to page 44, Battery Replacement. "Unscrew with a Philips screwdriver the little panel at the back. Remove the batteries, insert new batteries. To make sure they are replaced properly read instructions on page 4." Ping pong – page 44, page 4, page 44, and we have competent people who write manuals. They are only manual writers and they make a lot of money too. I suppose they are paid by the number of pages that are eventually printed [laughter]; because this is my problem with manuals. "Troubleshooting" – they will give you two paragraphs. "Screen not visible" – do this, do this, do this. If it doesn't, request online help, dial so-and-so. And you dial, you get no answer.

So, today modern life is a life of frustration, because none of us are competent to do anything – because we have this modern tendency to specialise. They have made us narrow specialists. It's like a family of rats where one can gnaw and make a hole in the wall, only the second one can squeeze through it, the third one can go and eat the cheese. I mean, I hope you get my meaning. *Specialisation destroys us*. I heard of people in Canada, it was at that time, chiropractics they call them, people who treat spinal injuries. And there was one fellow who was very famous, in Toronto; he was a specialist on the fifth cervical vertebra. I said, "What about the fourth and the third and the second?" "No, no, he can do it, but he is a specialist for the fifth." And people are awed – "Oh! Fifth cervical vertebral specialist – must be cat's whiskers!" It's like saying, "I can treat your right leg but not your left leg." Or you go to an ear specialist and he says, "I am a right ear specialist. Which ear do you have?" This is specialisation and we are wallowing in this specialisation!

We call ourselves specialist and are very happy to be known as a specialist because there is a big bank balance and a bigger income to support that statement and people say "Must be." I cannot avoid repeating, from *The Jungle Book* – I don't know how many of you have read it, because people nowadays, don't have time to read anything other than their computer...what you call it, monitors. In *The Jungle Book* the Bandar Log, the monkeys, they are all praising themselves: "We are the bravest, we are the wisest." And then there is a chorus, "We all say so, so it must be true." We don't need outside support for our self-esteem. After all, my bosses are making periodic performance appraisals. They cannot be fools. Otherwise they cannot be my bosses. And then his boss must be appraising him [laughs]. So this is a chain of command where the top boss makes sure that he is adequately protected by all sorts of insurance policies and this, that and the other, and initials everything without even looking. He says, "All right, you have seen it? Okay. Make sure, don't get me into trouble, Bill" or John or whatever, and initials it. It goes like that.

So you see, young ladies, young gentlemen, it becomes important for you to know where you are, what you are and how you are. Many people are afraid to go to the doctor because they don't want suddenly to find out that they are sick. Tragedy! In today's society you cannot afford to be sick. "Something I feel here." Wife says, "Why don't you go to…?" "Nothing wrong, must be gas – potatoes, you gave me yesterday." And one day he goes to the doctor and the doctor says, "Why didn't you come to me earlier? There was nothing, but because of your inattention you have allowed it to grow to a place where now I might have to open up." "No, no, please doctor, can you not do something? I cannot take leave" – the almighty income!

There is a time for everything and everything has its time. Life gives us all the time that we need for evolution. Growth in material terms is an ephemeral thing. Today's billionaire is tomorrow's pauper. Tomorrow's pauper is day after tomorrow's billionaire. After all, in the American scene we are hearing… I have abhyasis in America and one young lady floated a company. I don't know what she did because I don't know anything about these things, but eighteen months later she sold it for 860 million dollars. Another fellow made another similar modification in something, you know, program. Three Indians – it was famous, it was published everywhere. And they sold it for 350 million dollars. And they were very angry when they discovered six months later that it had been sold for one and half billion dollars to somebody else. I mean Prabhakar Rao, all these people, Bhaskar Rao, they all know these things.

So we are living in a situation in a society where worship is only money. Success is only making money. Health is only being able to look at your computer screen without blinking. And all three are degrading us physically, mentally, morally. I am not preaching to make abhyasis – far from it. I am trying to make human beings into human beings. Because when we live in a society where the rich have no concern for the poor, where the healthy have no concern for the sick, where the well-fed have no concern for the starving ones, where we are afraid to stop our car at an accident site because we don't want to get involved – not thinking that "Tomorrow if I am involved in an accident, will anybody stop for me?" – What have we come to?

Yoga is not something optional. Spiritual practice is not something optional. It has been made to appear that you may or you may not participate in self-development activities. But I assure you that if you don't it can lead to future regret, because like material life, the spiritual life is one half of life. In Sahaj Marg we always talk of the bird flying with two wings: the material and the spiritual. No bird has flown with one wing. Even the famous Jatayu [a bird in the Ramayana epic], Ravana had only to cut one wing and it fell. "Oh! I am Jatayu, King of birds!" – but without two wings even a sparrow is better than Jatayu. That is why the great saints of the world are remembered, are worshipped, are venerated (but unfortunately not followed), because they had two wings – however small, they could still fly. Our society is full of giants with one big huge wing, and they just flounder on earth, fluttering away and jumping a few feet, hopping a few feet, picking further grains of rice or wheat or whatever.

I emphasise that *spiritual activity is not optional.* Don't delude yourself into thinking, you have a choice. Today you may have a choice, even tomorrow, but a day will come when you will have no choice and that day you will regret, "I had so much time and I did not do it."

I think you have heard enough about Sahaj Marg from previous speakers in other sessions of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission's activities, just to make sure that you hear something other than my spouting. Because my talks are not informative. I believe in doing and learning, "Do and learn." The greatest teacher is personal experience. If you want to know what pain is, experience it. That's why we are afraid of pain and we run away from pain. In America I am told, aspirin alone counts for, what, several billion dollar sales; only aspirin – a painkiller. Because, at the least sign of pain, they swallow aspirin. We are pain avoiders. We never experience pain, and if we don't experience pain, it's like having a smoke detector which you shut off at night because you don't want to be awakened. It's like the modern European tendency of having telephones which you take out, or switch off at night, because you don't want to be disturbed. Imagine if your fire service was to go to sleep switching off their alarms, what would happen to you?

Pain is an alarm system to tell you, "Friend! Something is wrong, attend to it." There is the famous example of an Olympic marathon runner, who used to run, I am told, in those days forty miles. Primo Carnera was his name – Italian, and he had no sensitivity to pain. Once he ran the marathon and one nail pierced his shoe, went into him. He didn't know it. He was bleeding and he died. It is like the modern problem with diabetes, peripheral neuritis – insensitivity to pain. So diabetics are advised to go with shoes always, because you can cut yourself and you won't know it. You will bleed to death. Pain is a warning system. Early warning system; advanced warning system; attend to it. "I have a little, you know..." "Attend to it." "No, no, Sir, tomorrow presentation." "Yes, but will you be here to present it? You know, your presentation will be done by somebody if you are not here. What happens to *you*, your family?"

So make sure that you do today what you have to do today and spiritual life is part of it. Meditation *is* the only way of spiritual evolution. Try it, practice it and profit from it, grow from it and evolve into wise human beings. This is my prayer.

Thank you.

11

Do and Become

There are stories in the Puranas about, for instance, Shiva Parvati going in the *aakaasha marg* [space]; and one great devotee, an aged devotee, stumbling along below – no food and no water for days. Parvati is angry with Shiva Bhagwaan. She says, "*Tumhaara bhakt hai, param bhakt* [your devotee, great devotee], and you have put him in this state." Shiva Bhagwaan says, "I cannot do anything for him. It is his karma you see." Parvati says, "Come on..." – you know, wives have liberties which nobody else can take – she says, "Come on, you are Maheshwar, Parama Shivam, et cetera. *Log tarif karte hain* [people sing your praise], surely you can do something – I insist." So he creates a bundle of jewels, gold and puts it in his path, like this laundry we tie up together for the *dhobi* [washerman]. This old man is going along, fantasising; "Now I will come to a river, I will drink water but I have only one *dhoti*. I don't have a second dhoti even to change. So I will carefully go like this," and he steps over the bundle and walks on. Shiva Bhagwaan says,

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10 March 2002, Digboi, Assam

"*Dekho?* [See?]" Parvati says, "No, you are *maayavaadi* [creator of illusion]. You are doing some humbug. Do it again."

A hundred yards ahead the bundle is transported. Now the devotee has satisfied his thirst in his own mind, and he says, "I will go home. But my poor unfortunate wife, what will she give me? Even *chulha* [stove] will not be lit because there is nothing at home. I don't bring anything, even today *bhiksha* [alms] I have not got. But nevertheless, I am so hungry, so frustrated, I will kick her," and he lets out a kick and he kicks this bundle which is solid with jewels and gold and he says, "Hey, Shiva Bhagwaan, hey Shiva Bhagwaan, why are you doing this to me?" and he takes it and throws it.

So these are not empty stories. Your own Shastra has written these stories and says, unless you do, you cannot become. I mean, you cannot ask somebody to take exercise and you become fit, isn't it? You are sick, you take medicine. You want to improve your health, you walk, you exercise. You want to go to school and study, you study.

In yoga, it is the highest truth that if you don't do it, you can achieve nothing. Of course materially, we go round and round and round, it's like the hour hand and the minute hand of a clock going round and round, not going anywhere. So I must emphasise that without doing anything you cannot become anything, anything else to the contrary is false. People ask me, "Is your system so good?" I say, "No, it is effective." Effective and good are two different things.

A pharmacy is full of medicines. They are all good medicines but not for you, each one is for something else. I want the medicine that will suit me. In today's culture, in today's world, the minimum yoga –what Krishna Bhagwaan says in the Gita, "*Svalpamapyasya dharmasya traayate mahato bhayaat*" – even a little of this yoga will overcome great fears and opposition and obstacles, says Lord Krishna.

So I pray to all of you to try it, give the system a fair trial. It is not a one day practice. You cannot, for instance, go on an exercise bicycle for one day and then look at your weight. You cannot take one pill and expect results. You have to take the prescribed dose. In Sahaj Marg it is a minimum of six months dedicated practice, remembering that you are working for yourself, not to satisfy your guru, not to satisfy God – but for yourself.

Thank you.

12

The Value of Time

When we go to institutions of learning, I am sure there is nobody without this regret that how much more I could have learned when I was in school, when I was in college, when I was in institutes of higher learning. Because only when time has passed and we look back, we see how much we have lost – not how much we have gained. There is that old story of a lady saint in Tamil Nadu, Avvaiyar, and she was very arrogant, she thought she knew everything. Lord Muruga came to test her. And then when she was very arrogant and proud, he took a *mutthi bhar tak* [handful of] mud and said this is what you have learned, and pointed to the Himalayas and said that is what you could have learned.

I am not here to give a lengthy speech, but I hope you will all learn the value of time. In America they say time is money, but for me time is life. When there is no time left for you, there is no life left for you. We say 'his time is over'. It is easy to provide institutions of learning, Mr Venkatesh has done it, but *you* have to make use of the facilities available, and if you don't

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8 April 2002, Bangalore, India

do it today you are not going to do it tomorrow. And when you end up toothless, eyeless, unable to walk, you will regret it. So the time to prepare the future is today, in the present.

We have dreams. I used to dream also when I was young like you fellows here; dreams of greatness, dreams of money, dreams of riches, dreams of a beautiful wife, cars – the whole gamut of material ambition. One thing we students never dream is of really studying well and coming out, a brilliant student. That we never dream. But we think automatically because we pass through school classrooms, and college classrooms, and computer departments, we assume education is automatic. Let me assure you it is not.

You have to study. And the second thing is you have to learn that education will not stop when you leave this place. If you don't continue to study thereafter, you will remain what you are. May be with an MCA degree, but I know a lot of MCAs. Mr Venkatesh is part of the mission in which I work, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, and it is flooded with MCAs. Right here in front of you, Mr Prasanna Krishna works for IBM. He is a very senior officer earning a lot of money, but like me he also regrets that so many things we could've learned we did not learn. I sit before a big computer with a beautiful terminal and the monitor, and I don't know even the first alphabet of computers. I learned by working. But that's not enough. You have to have theory and practice together. Your teachers are all very well educated, highly educated people, coming here to give you of their knowledge. But there is always this little bit of suspicion between the teacher and the taught, and that they have to strive to remove. They have to become friends of students. Not remain teachers.

The one great thing about the American system of education, a student can sit with his leg on the table and the professor is on the other side. And he says, "Hi Prof," things like that. Of course we don't want to go down to those levels of shall I say, familiarity – because familiarity breeds contempt. But teacher and taught must interact like friendly brothers exchanging information, learning from each other. The teachers learning how to remain young, at least in heart if not in body, and the student learning how to age beautifully, gracefully, knowingly, knowledgeably. Otherwise these institutions will remain buildings. Annual Saraswati puja [worship of the goddess of knowledge], or big degrees printed on beautiful parchment papers, they mean nothing. If you in turn do not teach the next generation, again you are a failure. Because, like a tree which gives fruit, which gives the seed for the next planting, it is our human duty to pass on what we learn, what we earn, both.

India is full of fools who pass on what they earn. Unfortunately, most of them have nothing to pass on that they have learned because they have learned nothing. And the bigger tragedy is what little they learn they progressively unlearn or forget, thinking that money and power are enough. I know very rich people who say if I throw five thousand rupees, I can get the best brains in this country. Today it may be fifty thousand rupees. But still money is money. That sort of arrogance must never be part of your, shall I say, make up. Computers are not arrogant. They do everything. When you sit at a computer, you must learn humility. How much it can do, including plotting the trajectory of extra terrestrial vehicles, space stations, something going towards Mars, something going towards Pluto of which you read, millions and millions and millions of calculations per second. But never forget that the human being did it. He designed that machine which now works for him. So we can design machines which can work for us or we can become slaves of machines which would overpower us, and one day we will be… you know, in science fiction you have these horrors that one day that this world will be governed by robots and human beings will be their slaves. I hope some of you at least read science fiction because that is an area of literature which is very good for technology and technological students – how those authors have imagined situations which we see now today being duplicated in real life. So, remember, money lost can be made again. Health lost, it is very difficult to regain. Time lost can never be regained.

So I request all of you, exhort all of you: do not waste your time in youthful folly. Don't waste your parent's money and their hearts. And don't go after money. Money comes; rickshaw-wallahs earn money, illiterate millionaires have earned money. Who has not earned money? Even beggars earn money. That's not important. You want to become something in life. When you become something in life, money, power, recognition, they come, you cannot avoid it. The main thing is education. Number two, *vidyaa vinaya sampanne,* says the ancient Shastra – knowledge must give us humility, not arrogance and pride.

So, I pray to my guruji that you, with the co-operation of your professors, the equipment that has been provided here for you, the facilities – that all this will work together to make intelligent, capable human beings of you, who will serve yourself and your country and the future generations to come through you. May it be so.

Thank you very much.

13

Refine Your Heart

Dear brothers and sisters,

I have had a long stay in Karnataka, and I am wondering why I spent so much time here. Perhaps you have an answer, I don't know. You are very happy. That is good to hear. One thought was coming to me during meditation. There is this saying of Lord Krishna in the Gita, "As you come to me so I respond to you" – something like that. "As you look upon me, so I look upon you." That means you find what you put in, and nothing more. I think it applies to the guru also, because Babuji Maharaj said, "He is a mirror and he only reflects what is before him." If an abhyasi goes with love, he finds love reflected. If he goes with suspicion, he finds or he thinks the guru is suspicious; if he wants to cheat, he finds the guru is also a cheat. You only find what you put in.

Everything is in *your* mind, whether it is the guru or your wife or God himself. Because I know suspicious husbands, who look askance at their wife – they should not smile at somebody else, they should not talk to somebody else. And they make their life miserable

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9 April 2002, Bangalore, India

and their own life miserable though there is nothing to suspect, because it is the mind, which plays tricks. I think in Sahaj Marg too you will not find anything more than what you put into it. All this *Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu* doesn't hold water. They are all flatteries decided to praise, to please, and to try to fool the guru into a state of acceptance – Aha! Wonderful disciples! "*Guru Brahma, guru Vishnu, guru devo Maheshwara. Guru saakshaath parabrahmam*," Bismillah. And if he is a fool... fortunately he is neither a fool nor a wise man, he is what he is; he is not shaken by these flatteries. "*Tvameva maata cha pita tvameva...* [You alone are my mother and you alone are my father...]" – another flattery, another fraud committed on an innocent guru. So I repeat, I mean this is in all religions, whether it is in Sikhism, or Hinduism or Islam, "*Bismillah ir-rehman ir–rahim* [In the name of God, most Gracious, most Compassionate]."

All religions or the adherence of all religions indulge in this sort of false praise, *stuti*, flattery. We get nothing out of it. That is the failure of religion, because you get what you get. If you put money in the bank, you can withdraw it. You put a hundred rupees in the bank you cannot withdraw more than a hundred rupees. You love your wife, she loves you. You suspect her, you are a miserable couple. You beat your son, when he grows up he may not beat you, but he would like to. So always remember as a human being you get no more than what you invest in anything. I am not talking of money. Even there, it is a fraud, because when you put some money and you get a lot of dividend, it is because the buyer buys and he is willing to pay the price for the product. If he is not willing to pay the price of the product, the company fails and you lose your money. It is a very simple equation. So that is number one – don't cheat yourself into thinking that you can praise your way through life and praise Allah, praise *khuda*, praise God. I mean if they were to be fooled by such silly and cheap and childish tricks, they would not deserve to be a guru or a God, isn't? Would they? '*Nahin, nahin, Sahab*, [no, no, Sir] they wouldn't.' So then why are we fooling ourselves? Because essentially we are cheating ourselves.

If I smile at my Master he will praise me. I always say in UP language *ismile* – and you will only get *ismile*, not a smile back. So in your own interest, because he is not concerned what you think of him, what you do with him, he is not concerned. And God doesn't worry because he has no mind according to Sahaj Marg. Poor fellow, he doesn't even know He is God, he doesn't know where He is, what He is or whether He is at all – because even the distinction of existence and non-existence is a false concept. If God knows that He exists, then there is something which doesn't exist. So He cannot be subdued or subject to this duality of existence and non-existence. Therefore the *Naasadiya Sukta*, of which Babuji was so fond – it says, you can neither say He exists nor that He does not exist. Very confusing to logical minds; logical minds want this or that, but God is not susceptible to logic. Spirituality is not susceptible to logic. There is no logic. Logic is a worldly thing: light or darkness, good or bad, poor or rich, man or woman, this or that.

So Babuji said, in one of his famous, oft-quoted statements, "This and that have now disappeared." That means duality has disappeared. There is no more existence or non-existence. If somebody asks him, do you exist? He will say, "*Aap ne ka kaha?* [What are you telling?]" Babuji, you don't exist? *"Haan, shaayad!* [Yes, may be!]" Who knows? When the knower himself doesn't know, that means there is nothing to know. When he who exists or is dangling between existence and non-existence, now this, now that, now appearing, now disappearing – what is existence? What is non-existence? It exists when it is there. It does not exist for you when you don't see it. Therefore we say, "Oh! What I don't see doesn't exist; what I hear doesn't exist." So slowly we come to depend on our senses to prove that something exists or something doesn't exist, something is good or something is bad, something is useful or something is not useful. It is all sensory mechanism, and play.

Reality cannot be decided by the senses. The senses cannot reach up to Reality. And as the Upanishad says: "Where the mind does not reach; where your speech cannot go," what will you do with your mind and your senses? So we have to learn in spirituality to purify our heart and then put that heart into that bank which we call guru and then he takes care of it. It grows, it becomes divinised. It exists or not exists as He chooses. When he exists, it exists; when he doesn't exist, it also does not exist. If there is no bank, there is no money.

If there is no wife, there is no love. If there is no son, there is no examination, no problem, also no joy of fatherhood, motherhood. So our existence depends on his existence. And if you say he doesn't exist, today my master is dead – you will also be dead in a sense, even though you may be physically around, pretending to be big, tall, handsome, powerful, moneyed, rich.

So the safest and the only bet in Sahaj Marg is to *refine your heart*. Make it as pure, as simple, as free of complexities, as possible. Zero, if possible, and put it into that zero which is the guru and then we shall find the bliss. I don't know whether to call it the bliss of existence or the bliss of non-existence, because we experience both in our lives. Sometimes when we are very happy to be alive, we say, "God, I am happy to be alive today, such a wonderful life!" There are other times when we say, "Why don't you take me away, you damn fool, I have had enough of this stupid life." "God the benevolent, God the merciful! Stupid! False, lies," you curse. "*Khuda andha hai* [God is blind]," you say. "Where is love in God? Why is that child suffering? Why is that human being beaten by her husband? Why is this man being cheated by his friend?" No questions, no answers, because these questions have no answers, these questions are totally subjective, according to your experience of the moment. Experiences are false, because they are sensory and the mind interprets them according to your own samskara, and there is no truth, there is no reality behind them.

Therefore, in an extreme sense Vedanta says, this world is illusionary. That is the sole truth, all the rest, *jagan mithyaa* according to Shankaracharya – it's all false; it's all ephemeral; it's a creation of my own imagination. When I eat something I shouldn't eat but which tastes good and I am happy, I think I am a wise man because I ate something good and it made me happy. Tomorrow morning my stomach is upset and I blame that which I ate, I don't blame myself. "No, no, I am all right. Normally I wouldn't..." et cetera. So when we are right we take the credit, and when we are wrong God is responsible. This is common human tendency. When you make a foolish investment where your friend promises you four hundred rupees for every rupee that you invest, you are wise. And your wonderful friend is trustworthy, a good friend from childhood days. And when everything is lost, "Sir, I trusted that fellow, he let me down badly." What about your avarice for money – four hundred for one? It is like gambling on a horse. And a horse, it will give you at least dung, here even dung you don't get.

So this is where we have to be absolutely objective in our relationship with each other, with our guru, with God. What is it that I must have; having which, I don't need anything else – this is *jijnaasa*. It is not knowledge, it is not research, it is not experience. It is jijnaasa. It is something of a cross between knowledge and search, a serious search, an endeavour, an effort made with the heart; and when you get that answer, pursue it relentlessly. And if He says I don't exist, you say, "Doesn't matter, I too will not exist."

There is that famous story of the wife who followed her dead husband with Yama [God of death] – Savitri and Satyavan. Yama is holding her husband dangling from his *paasha* [the noose]. He says, "Why are you following me, you cannot come. He is gone, I have taken him." But women are either – you can say they are very sly or they are very wise depending on which you consider complimentary. She is absolutely determined to get her husband back. And when Yama sees her so persistent, he says, about to cross into the border between life and death, "Ask for a boon." and she says, "I want a son." Unthinkingly Yama says, "*Tathaastu.* [May it be so.]" This comes because he thinks he is very great, he has got his Yama paasha firmly in hand and Satyavan firmly in it. So he says tathaastu. He doesn't think, he is about to cross the border and she says, "Halt, my husband!" He says, "But my dear, he is dead. I am taking him." "But you just gave me a boon of a son." Yama must have cursed himself. He says, "A simple woman tricked me."

And that is another story, because we are all tricked by so-called simple women [laughter] and we love them for it. Well, God bless them. What I mean to say is even Yama makes mistakes; because he thinks he is all-powerful. He has taken his prey. "That *atma* [soul] has no mind; nothing can take it from me. I am the Lord of Death. I am the Dharmaraja. Who can touch me?" In a moment of inattention, possibly ego, here we are. And she returned with her husband intact. What made her do it? Love for the husband.

So Babuji said, "Love conquers all." Love conquers even death. He was not referring to Savitri and Satyavan. He said that for the devoted disciple of a capable guru, if he loves his guru death cannot come near him. Here at least death took and gave back. There, there is no question of death taking at all. When Yama comes for a devoted abhyasi, if at all he comes, the guru will say, "*Roko! Kya karne vaale hain aap?* (What are you going to do?)" "No, no, I have come…" "He is mine. You can go." And Yama will beat the retreat.

We have this story about the other young fellow – Markandeya was it? – where he is given sixteen years of life. And on the appointed day, Yama comes. The young man goes and hugs the Shiva *linga*. Yama throws his noose, it falls unfortunately over the boy and the linga and Shiva comes out. He says, "What do you mean, young man?" to Yama. Yama says, "Lord, I am your servant. I have come to do my appointed duty. You are my boss, I am your servant." Shiva says, "This, you shall not touch." But he says, "But your own order – sixteen." He says, "He is ever-sixteen." So you see, God can make rules, break rules, and change rules.

Unfortunately, our politicians also apply these rules [laughter] to themselves. They have no red light. They have no tax laws. They have no morality. For them if they cheat it is not cheating, it is their due. So our politicians behave like gods. Fortunately, God does not behave like a politician [laughter]. He does not say, "Join my party and I will give you." He says, "Be deserving and you get." Anybody, you can be a Shudra, a Sardar, a Muslim, I mean it, anything – for Him there is no difference of caste and creed, or where you are born or what you are born as, *chandala* [of low caste] – nothing.

So to become deserving, I repeat there is only one thing you can do. All that you have to offer which is indestructible is the *heart*. Body perishes, it grows old, it is useless, isn't it? The heart never grows old. That is why you can find an old man of ninety still very young-hearted. Sometimes if they belong to that category they are still chasing girls – at ninety. There is an old joke about an old man of ninety who was chasing a girl and his grandson asked him, "Granddad, why are you chasing a girl?" He said, "I don't remember why I am chasing girls, but I do it." To that extent the body is gone. He doesn't even know what he is doing or why he is doing it. It is a very important joke, you remember it. Because that love still persists, that idea that he is still young persists – he says, "What is old? Me? No." And if he was an ex-military man he would try to start a parade with a stick for a gun, and salute.

So, these are all fantasies of our own mind making tricks with us, playing tricks with us. None of us is either young or old. We are eternal, our spirit, the essence in me that is *Me*, which makes me – *Me*, is eternal. Nothing can touch it, nothing can destroy it. As the Veda says, water cannot wet it, fire cannot burn it, Yama cannot take it. Nothing can happen provided you are of that original essence from which you descended, you try to become that all over again by purification, clean your heart. No more love and hate, no more avarice, no more grasping tendencies, no more cheating anybody else – live a life natural to a human being, full of love, compassion, mercy, wisdom, sharing, thinking of others before you think of yourself, feed your neighbour before you feed yourself, obey the rules before you ask others to obey the rules.

In England they have this famous edict as I should call it: "The maker of the law is its first servant." In India, the maker of the law is its master, like our government people, our politicians. Red light is not for them, taxation is not for them. I think it was in the life of Indira Gandhi, when Jagjivan Ram, it was discovered he had not filed his income tax returns for ten years, and Indira Gandhi said he is too busy. No! If you or I had done it, we would probably go to jail, our property would be seized, attached – because we are not too busy, we are not ministers, we are not politicians. So beware of such politicians, beware of such governments, beware of such rulers, and beware of such gods. If your god says, offer me a prasad, I will bless you – beware of him. If your lord says, sacrifice your son and I will give you an important life (it is happening every day in the newspapers), beware of him. He is a scoundrel. He is a cheat, he is a liar. God cannot ask, because He does not want, He does not need. We should also not ask because we don't want, we don't need, in the faith that what I need is always given to me by a benevolent thing which we call Nature. If I trust in the benevolence of that which I call my Lord and my Master, I don't have to go begging on my knees, I don't have to flatter, I don't have to praise, I don't have to bribe even my god.

Today bribery is everywhere, rampant – in temples, in mosques, in gurudwaras, in churches. Where is there not bribery? I mean every time you put *zaqquat* or whatever they call it, it is a bribe. God does not need my money. I like the Sikh concept of *kar sevak*. It is my house I am building; I am not bribing God, or Guru Gobind Singhji. My house I construct and it shall be as I construct it. If I cheat in the materials, one day the roof will collapse and I will die below it. If I create it with love, that house will love me and I will live a loving life loved by not only my people but my house itself. So *kar sevak* – in that spirit if you offer your everything, whether it is money or *seva* [service], or *mehnat* [effort], *parishram* [toil], or just your love, come and sit there and love, that is the positive way of spiritual growth and eventually of merging with That which you call Reality, which is only Zero and zero becoming Zero.

Thank you.

14

See the Divine in Others

All these things have to be dealt with, but my main intention is to see that this, Uttaranchal, deserves what it gets. You know, there are two ways – human beings give what we deserve, or I should say what they think we deserve. Your bosses do it, your teachers do it, your husbands do to wives; wives do to husbands – everybody. We try to assess on the human level what is deserved and generally reduce it by twenty percent, then reduce it by a further twenty per cent, and end up with fifty percent of what they deserve. All company executives know this, all people who employ people know this; all administrators know this, because the intention is to get the maximum by giving the minimum. Unfortunately, the invertendo principle in Sahaj Marg, our spirituality, where my divine Master himself created this organisation, seems to be: give the maximum, and get the minimum. It is not a joke although I am smiling – but it is a very real fact, because all his life, since I went to Babuji Maharaj's divine feet in 1964, he said, "I am giving so much and nobody seems to be aware of it. Even those

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19 May 2002, Satkhol, India

who are aware don't know what they are getting. And even those who are aware of something about what they are getting don't seem to value it." And he said, "The unfortunate thing is, I have so much more to give, because what I am giving is hardly a fraction of what I can give."

In our Mission it is very common that abhyasis, our people, become abhyasis and think they have now earned liberation. Liberation, Babuji told me is child's play in spirituality. He said, "Take the soul from here to there at the moment of death and that is it." And Lalaji Maharaj said, "With the blink of an eye a human being can be liberated if the guru is capable." And we are happy, we are satisfied with liberation, which only indicates that we have come to spirituality to escape from the problems of life. We are using Sahaj Marg as an escape. Now this is not a system for escapists. If somebody is just satisfied with spirituality as a means to liberation, I mean it is very unfortunate, very sad, and I am not surprised at all that Babuji Maharaj spent most of his life in sadness.

The second thing is, he said human beings have so much potential. When we say that God made man in his own image, it is not a joke. He did; but we are destroying that image by destroying what little we can think of as divinity, divine qualities, divine values and becoming merely human. And many of us argue that "Oh, after all, I am only a human being." We are not *only* human beings. We are only human beings if we think we are only human beings. But we are gods if we think we are gods. As my respected brother

Ashok Singhji said, we have to think that we already are, because our Hindu dharma says that there is no real yatra or journey in spirituality. We are already that which we are trying so hard to become. All that we have to do is to realise it though. So in spirituality the word used is Realisation. Liberation – what is the next? Anyway doesn't matter. Realisation is the word, not becoming or being crowned or something like that.

So, we have not understood the fundamental idea of spirituality. That, one, it is not a means of escape from life. Two, that if you restrict it to liberation, you should only go back to kindergarten and learn everything again, as in our human life – because what we learn, we forget. We learn so many things. I mean it is a very sad thing that in India after ten thousand hoary years of culture, tradition, being invaded by rishis and their teachings, their methods, their tapasya, so-called gods in the Himalayas continually blessing us, we still have to introduce value-based education in schools in 2000 AD. It is a failure of the family system that parents are not giving enough guidance to their children in values. I would even go to the extent of saying that parents are training their children in all the wrong values: you must be ambitious, number one; you must be an achiever, number two; you must earn money for happiness, health, success. You see, we are holding out the wrong ideals and then we have to correct all this when they are twenty, twenty-five, forty, fifty, sixty. It is a losing battle that we are fighting all the time.

So you see, Babuji Maharaj said Sahaj Marg is very simple. The way of achieving God is simple because God himself is simple, but we complicate it. As brother Somakumar said, "Kerala, instead of being the land of God should be the land of temples" – but it applies to the whole of India. Our religion is our destructive force in this country, I have said this often. I don't mind who listens to it, who repeats it, where, it doesn't matter. And any one of you who is religious or claims to be religious is number one a liar; number two, an enemy to himself; number three, an enemy of society. Please write this down in your diaries, put it on your shaving mirrors: "If I am religious, I am my own enemy; I am an enemy of my society." And you will realise what spirituality is about.

Religion divides, spirituality unites. Today you see this happening – our political leaders playing tricks with us in the name of democracy, religion being bartered, and thrown around from various camps, people becoming chief ministers and ministers on the basis of religion. People without any knowledge of God or anything like that, upholding some particular principle of some divine being having been born somewhere, and destroy our society. Virtually, our society is destroyed. Hopefully, the destruction is by divine will so that we can start building a new edifice – an edifice of spirituality. Because Master assured me that nothing is destroyed by God except to lay a new foundation for a new society. But are we ready for it? Are we willing to accept it or are we still going behind Rama, Lakshmana and Durga and what all... you know? We have to decide!

Now this ashram is a particular example of a new beginning. Uttaranchal is a state full of superstition, backwardness, inhibitions, multifarious gods and goddesses, all without purpose, without knowledge, without anything except fear; because superstition is resting on fear. Yesterday one local abhyasi asked me "Why are our prefects not working in Uttaranchal?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Where are the Uttaranchal abhyasis here, now you are here? Where are the Uttaranchal abhyasis? Where are the Satkhol abhyasis? Where are the Pura abhyasis? Where are the Satoli abhyasis? Sheetala Estate abhyasis, where are they?" I cannot answer, because I say, "Well, we did have a few from the intercollege, we did have a few from somewhere here and there, but what can you do if they don't come?" You can take a horse to the pond, but you cannot make it drink. But that applies to horses you see! Even a horse will come if you hold a handful of hay or grass, and it will follow you.

So you see, our prefects are too, what should I say, sanguine, self-satisfied: "I am doing what I can." Babuji Maharaj always questioned this: "Are you doing what you can or are you thinking that you are doing what you can?" It's too easy to say, "I am doing what I can. What can I do?" It is too easy a way of satisfying yourself, satisfying your conscience, and saying "I am doing my best." "I am doing what I can," is itself a questionable statement. "I am doing my best" is never acceptable as a statement. And of course, this final problem, the ego clashes between preceptors; Nainital had it, so many other centres have it [laughs] – the

Mission is rife and rampant with this ego business. I am fed up and I sometimes wish that there were three presidents in the Mission so that we could quarrel amongst each other and send the mission to the dogs quickly. Roorkee of course, it has been rampant from the beginning! I have not known a day of peace in Roorkee among the prefects.

Why are we quarrelling like children? I am bigger; you are senior; you are this; you are that. Nobody is big, nobody is small in the eyes of God. In the front of Master, the best man is the man who does most work for his Mission. Babuji Maharaj once told me, I will tell you in Hindi, *"Yeh pyaar vyaar sab bakwaas hai. Log pyaar ka matlab nahin jaante. Shabd nahin jaante, yeh lafz kyaa hai nahin jaante.* [This talk of love is useless. People not only do not understand the true meaning of love, but do not know the word even.]" I asked him, "How do you choose?" He said, *"Jo kaam karne ko taiyyar hain; Aur yaad rakho, Parthasarathi, jo mera kaam karta hai, woh Nature ka kaam karta hai, kyonki main Nature ka kaam kar raha hoon.* [Those who are ready to work; and remember, Parthasarathi, one who does my work, does Nature's work, because I do Nature's work.]"

So we forget you see, in blandishing our egos, in pampering our egos, we are pandering to ourselves, our lower nature. We are forgetting the higher purpose of our own life – forget Master, forget Divinity, forget Nature – are you at least promoting your own welfare? Arrogance! What is the use? You win an argument but lose friends. What is the use? Even at home, people who are always arguing with their wives... well, the wives have to be wives, because the law says so. But is your wife willing to love you or is she there because of some sort of sense of duty? You must examine all these things carefully, you see. Arrogance, ego, use of vulgar language, they are all self-defeating. You may get a momentary sense of satisfaction that, "Oh, I have kicked this beggar in the back," but it doesn't help. You make more and more enemies every day. Of course, if they are afraid of you, they will cow down to you, and behind your back they will stab you. Everybody who is egotistic, who is arrogant, who is proud, who thinks he is bigger than the others is indeed at the lowest level of human beings, and deserves our pity. And that our prefects are succumbing to this is a tragic thing.

So what more can I say? I have nothing to say except to appeal to your own idea of self-interest, not selfishness – self-interest. Is my behaviour conducive to my spiritual evolution? Is what I am doing conducive to my spiritual evolution? Is what I am doing with others conducive to – forget the rest – my spiritual evolution? If you can say 'yes' to these three questions, you can work like a Master. Try it! Give it an honest trial and see what it can produce by way of result. And then we can meet in subsequent years and say we have nothing to talk about, let us meditate.

Brother Gyan Sareen was saying, it is a very simple thing. When you want to look in a mirror and it is dusty, you remove the dust. You don't make a new mirror every time. When your pond – as in most houses in Kerala or Bengal, it has this algae on top, you just push it aside and take your bath. In some places they make a framework of bamboo and put it on so that the algae doesn't come inside. Everywhere the cleaning serves. We don't believe in cleaning. *"Safaai?" "Haan, Saab, roz karte hai.* [Cleaning? Yes, Sir, we do it everyday.]" Are you really doing it? And now I am going to introduce a new scheme, from the first of June – a new requirement. Every prefect must give a diary of sittings he has taken from another prefect. And if I see, if preceptors who don't take at least three sittings from prefects, I may very well retire them with honour – because this has become something of a joke. Babuji Maharaj has said every prefect must take sittings from other prefects – for three reasons: one, you need to be cleaned; you cannot do yourself, you need to be cleaned; two, it increases brotherhood and mutual trust; three, and most important, it destroys your ego – *"Nahin, nahin, voh kaun hai hamey sitting dene wale?* [Who is he to give me a sitting?]"

If you read the history of the great spiritual heroes in all religions, they were supposedly ordinary human beings – weak, without any power, but who had the good sense to invoke divine power when they needed it – whether in the Christian tradition, whether in the Hindu tradition. It is said of Ravana that after thousands of years of *tapasya* [penance] when Shiva Bhagwaan appeared, he wanted a boon that he should not be destroyed by *devas* [gods], by *daanavas* [demons], by *yakshas* [nature spirits], by *asuras* [demons] et cetera, et cetera. And two things he left out – *nara* [man] and *vaanara* [monkeys]. He said, "*Yeh hamaare liye kya kar sakte hain?* [What can they do to me?]" And nara and vaanara destroyed him. With all his wisdom, his *tapo bal* [power of penance], with his *shakti* [power] of bringing Shiva himself to earth to bless him, he proved a fool, you see.

Remember, anything that you think low of, cheaply of, will destroy you finally. It can be a thorn in your foot – many people have died. It can be the lowliest person you think, and one day he is your boss. Never think low of another human being because human beings are created in the image of God by God Himself. If He has created man in His image, I have no right to think of him as something less than God himself. This is spiritual teaching. See the divine in others. It is easy to see that somebody's nose is bent. You know the famous story of Ashtavakra [bent at eight points]; when in Janaka's court – and the great pundits there, all laughed at Ashtavakra.

So, brothers and sisters, this is an appeal to you: your own interest – Self-interest, don't destroy it by pettifogging, by cheap tricks, by useless ego blandishments, because you are destroying yourself. We have no right, we have no strength, and we have no power to destroy anything else in creation except ourselves. But remember the same power can be used to make yourself into That which you are.

Thank you.

15

God is For Everyone

It is very interesting that we have heard four young people speak today. I am reminded of the Christian statement that "be ye as little children and thou shall reach the kingdom of heaven" – as little children, not little children, but *as* little children. We must be innocent, we must be brave, we must have the idealism of youth because all of them spoke about idealistic values. The older people always talk about how difficult it is, how far it is. You give them *puri*, it is too soft, you give them *bhakri* [roti], it is too hard, they are never happy with what they get. I think spiritually speaking we should write off people above forty-five, unless they are really in Sahaj Marg and there too if they are deserving abhyasis.

Like sister Viji and sister Kanchan said: too much talk, too little doing. And I don't know why people want to be like the master when they don't know what the master is, who he is, what he is supposed to do. And if I may say so, after looking at my master Babuji Maharaj, living with him for so many years, travelling with him so many times, after hearing

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16 June 2002, Calcutta, India

from him stories of his guruji Lalaji Maharaj – we are keeping their photographs, we are garlanding them, but what is the use? Because have you ever wondered how much they suffered? Babuji Maharaj says Lalaji, in his whole family had only one torn *razai* [quilt] and under that razai six or seven people had to sleep in winter in Fatehgarh. We say, "Wah, wah! [Wow!]"

We have seen – most of you here have seen Babuji Maharaj; but "Oh, we want to be like him! We want to be like him!" — it is all *tamasha.* This is like a young girl who goes in a bus wanting to be like Hema Malini, Vyjayanti Mala, Rekha, Moshumi Chatterjee [actors], I don't know who else, the modern craze – Aishwarya Rai, hmm? And you go and buy cosmetics. You are never going to look like them because you don't have the face, you don't have the figure and, if I may say so, you would not do what they are willing to do, to become what they have become – I hope.

So, it is not in looking like, that you can become somebody – you have to *be* like, *work* like. This we don't want to do, because obviously, very patently, there is a great deal of effort in it. Most of your time has to be given to it, all your love has to be put on these people who sit before you, deserving or undeserving; you have to meet when they say. It's like a mother. The boy fails in his examination and comes home, he does not care because papa will give him one more year, college will admit him, the mother says, "*Beta, kab tak chalega ye?* [Son, till when will this continue?]" Isn't it? So unless we are prepared to suffer, to work even when you think you will fall dead, you are betraying this desire to be like the master, because you will never be – because you don't want to be. We can only become *that* which we want to become; that which we want to become with our heart, with our soul, with our every living breath that we take.

So I hope aspirants will remember this and not remember just to talk and give lectures and be satisfied that I am spreading Sahaj Marg – spreading what? Blah blah. If you take an unlit kerosene lamp and pretend to be spreading light, everybody will think you are not only a fool but probably a madman. When you cannot yourself see the light, how are the others going to see the light?

I had a letter from a foreign abhyasi, she has said, "Chariji, I am sorry to tell you one thing, that after you gave us the slogan 'Love all whom He loves', most of the abhyasis have forgotten Babuji's saying 'Love Him who loves all'; so they are very busy loving each other," And, as brother Ajay Bhatter said, we are forgetting Him who has made all this possible. It is very true, because only three weeks back I got a letter from a foreign abhyasi, as I said.

So, we have to be very alert and always aware of what we have to do, what we have to think. There is the example given by brother Prakash Mahadevan of the US. Prakash told of this scientist, a mathematician who received a Nobel Prize, nothing less, and yet he was crazy – he was schizophrenic. Because in his mind there were only hallucinations of grandeur, of greatness: "I am big, I am strong, I am this...." And all these illusions and hallucinations put him in a mental prison inside himself and in a mental hospital outside, which, as he rightly said, only love could change – and he had a loving wife. But one man and one wife and she can be loving or not, but millions of people can have one master who is loving them, but they don't think much of that! I don't know why – because after all a wife's love is more productive, I suppose, than Master's love!! It gives you daily comfort, it gives you your daily bread, it satisfies that part of the Christian prayer – "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our evil as we forgive them for ... so and so and so."

So that is a very interesting reference to something I have been thinking of for the last three to four weeks, ever since I received that letter. Have I unwittingly done damage to abhyasis by giving this slogan to love all whom He loves, which I gave with the hope that there will be a brotherhood, people will love each other, abhyasis will help each other, support each other in their Sahaj Marg practice, and all become lights? But in the bargain I think everything is being lost; we neither love Him who loves all nor love all whom He loves, but some sort of a *khichdi* [mixture] is coming into effect – part of this and part of that. When you need, Love Him who loves all; and when you don't need, Love all whom He loves, that sort of thing.

I am sure all these things, I mean, most of these things will be corrected when our ashram comes up because an ashram is an impersonal home for all of us. It is not your house, it is not my house, it is *our* house. Even when there are seven brothers and six sisters in a family, they may have reservations about going to a brother's house or one sister's house, but to the mother's house everybody goes. After all, that is where we were born, *maayki* {mother's house}. Nobody thinks. Even brothers who hate each other will go together to that mother's house, because there they will find the love that is obvious and available without limits. It is interesting that among the Christian nuns in each order, the chief of the order lives in a house called the Mother House because that is where the eggs are laid, that is where they are hatched, from there the brood goes out and to there the brood comes back.

So that is a reference to an impersonal home which is very much each one's, without being anyone's. God is like that. Nobody can say God is mine. Yes, God is. God cannot be possessed, as I was reading in a book; God possesses us, we cannot possess God; and whenever people think they possess God they get a rap on the head. "I am everybody's, not only yours," God says. And if you are jealous that He is also with the sinner and criminal, He says, "That is my problem, they are my children too." It is not for you to judge your own brothers and sisters. Let the father judge. Let the mother judge.

So, God is for everyone. He does not distinguish between saints and sinners, white and black, male and female; and we claim all this in Sahaj Marg and say that it is a universal system. And, as sister Kanchan rightly said, where is the universality when in Sahaj Marg you go to South Africa and the centre is filled with Gujaratis and nobody else – no Africans? You go to another place in Gujarat, only Gujaratis nobody else; you go to Tamil Nadu, only Tamilians nobody else. Where are the local people? I mean, here you come to Bengal – I have said this hundred times before, only then we had twenty-two Bengalis *kattar* [staunch] – God bless them, they sowed the seed. What happened to the rest of Kolkata? Slowly the Gujaratis came, there were problems like in a marriage; problems of adjustment – Gujarati wife not able to get on with a Bengali husband and vice versa. But slowly some sort of peace has settled and that peace has come about only because we have one goal – to create an ashram in Kolkata.

So, as another sister rightly said, without one goal we are lost. Humanity is what we call like a bag of grain thrown out, or like pearls thrashed on the floor – something going under the sofa, something under the bed – you can't pick them up again. So Krishna says in the Gita, "I am like the thread which goes through the pearls and makes it a necklace." – "*Sutre maniganaah iva.*" But you have to permit Him to become. He must be allowed to hold you together, He must be your ideal, He must be your goal, He must be your everything. But we have abhyasis… and I am a little happy that sister Kanchan did not say, "I come here and I also look around and I don't see abhyasis." I was almost afraid that she was going to say it, and in a way it is partially true because how many of us are real abhyasis? Abhyasi does not mean wearing a badge; abhyasi does not mean having Babuji's photograph in their bedrooms. Abhyasi means 'doing abhyas'.

How many of us can say they are real abhyasis? I am grateful to sister Kanchan for not breaking a dirty egg in public. But it is a concern. She could have asked, she should have asked. Because the youthful are brave, brave with an innocence which we, when we become old, we lack – "How can I say that? She will get angry or he will get angry and they may leave the Mission."

Once Babuji told me, what is the use of having two hundred people in the Mission if none of them is meditating. I said, "But Babuji, at least they are here." He said, "That is all, they are here. They come here, they think they are here, but they are at home. Even when they are here they have no thought of the Master and the Mission and the method. They are worried about the house, the family they have left behind." They are not anxious to remain here, they are anxious to go home as quickly as possible, in the hope, in the expectation that Babuji would have given them whatever he had to give in abundance. And when they could muster the courage to go to him and ask, they said, "Babuji, I would like to leave tonight," and Babuji was always sad. He said, "You have just come." He says, "No, no, but you know, I have to go to office on Monday, my wife is sick." Every time you scratch your head and say something, you know it is a lie or it is a questionable secret. It is a very revealing, very telling body movement. So Babuji used to be sad. He said, "Why do they come all this distance if they don't want me to do what I have to do for them?"

Here also you find, sitting is over – twenty people have gone. First speaker speaking then few more have gone. I think eventually only those remain who are intending to eat lunch here today, not because they want to hear the talks or enlarge their brotherhood or be sincere and talk about more and more of less and less. They are people who have probably decided no cooking at home today because, "We hear Chariji is going to eat there, so we will all eat together."

I am sorry if I sound uncharitable, but if not a hundred percent, ninety-nine percent of what I say is always true, based on my experience. I don't intend to hurt people. I intend to wake up people. And when you try to wake your husband who is sleeping, even when he tells you "wake me up," he is angry. Every wife knows this. You wake up your son – son says, "Mummy, tomorrow I have to go and write my exam, please wake me up at 4.30," he is angry. Nobody likes to be woken up. When Kumbhkarna is awakened by Ravana when the war needs him, Kumbhkarna is angry. So they have to propitiate him with *karpura aarti* [a religious ritual], with tons of food, with girls dancing on his chest and then Kumbhkarna comes awake. Nobody likes to be awakened. That is why I think God is eternally awake, because if He should sleep and we have to awaken Him, probably He would destroy the universe. And one of our abhyasis was saying, "Where are the abhyasis? I don't see them in the train. There are no abhyasis." But I may say something which Babuji Maharaj always said, "If you have lit a lamp you will see their faces, good or bad, black or white, evil or virtuous, saint or sinner – light must be reflected from objects around you." This is the law, it is a scientific law. So when there is total darkness, I believe our own light is lacking. So, light the lamp here {heart}.

There used to be a famous singer in Bengal, the blind singer of Bengal he used to be called in the thirties – K.C. Dey. I don't know whether any of you have heard of him or heard him singing. He used to be famous for bhajans, the blind man. He sang one song which I used to hear in my college days: "*Tan ka karle bandh kivaada man ki khidki khol.* [Close the door of the body and open the window of the heart.]" But we don't want; we only want to use our intellect – "*Woh bura aadmi hai, yeh bhala aadmi hai, woh achha aadmi hai.* {He is a bad man, he is a good man}." What do you know of *bura* and *bhala* {bad and good}? Can any of you really tell me who is a good man? Nobody knows. We judge by what we know superficially. *Unhone daan diya* {he gave charity}; somebody goes to the temple everyday, somebody bathes twice in the Ganga every morning – they are all good people. But what is, in reality, inner? Unless you can see *That*, we cannot judge and *That* I think only the master knows. But knowing it, he keeps quiet; knowing it, he accepts us; knowing it, he is willing to work on us and transform us; and knowing that is inside and not outside, he has developed this unique marga – transmission, cleaning – and therefore his job is done like that.

As sister Viji said, the first sitting *must* be a connection which cannot be broken, then your work is finished. But we get people... every time they come we have to start afresh, like the consummation of marriage. The spiritual consummation in the first sitting – the transmission; and in that sitting if the Master has been able to go into your heart, nothing else to be done, automatically his seed is fertilized, we grow and grow until we don't know what we are going to become, when we have become, but we *shall* become. But every time we drop off, we indulge in *nindastuti* {criticism} and say all this is rubbish, and go off for six months to some Sri-Sri-Sri – somebody who is starting a new marga – and then come back and say, "No, no, I was there for six months but I found nothing there" – he has to start afresh; he has to clean out all the rubbish that you have accumulated in your meanderings. And it is your time which is lost, not his time, *your time*. Every time you indulge in going to somebody else and then come back, it is like a marriage which is destroyed; and then trying to re-establish it again, it will not happen in one day or in one night. It can take much longer than the time that has already passed.

So, faithfulness means faithfulness to yourself. You are not faithful to the Master. The Master does not want your faithfulness; he can do without it. He does not need your love; you may need his, I don't know. What you need is to be true to yourself, faithful to yourself, aware of what is good for you and do only that. "*Nahi, nahi*, my friend took me to Sri Sri-Sri-Sri-Sri so and so." Alright, go with a friend, where will the friend take you? Babuji Maharaj said friends will generally take you *downwards*. If there are twenty people gathered together, you will find the lowest of them prevailing. Somebody will want tea, somebody will want coffee, somebody says beer, and everybody will drink beer. There is a general tendency to go towards the lowest. Otherwise we would have become saints long ago. Because, if out of twenty people one is a saintly person, we should all desire what he desires. But generally the tendency is to corrupt even the saint, if he is your friend. "No, no I have seen you yaar, you are an old fellow, my old school friend, one sip of beer – *se kya ho jaata hai?"* [What will happen with a sip of beer?] So the world is always busy trying to be happy, trying to pull down those who are rising, rather than to rise to where he is. Remember this: beware of friendships.

Sahaj Marg does not speak of friends; it only speaks of brothers and sisters. But so much talk about such a small subject. That it is for yourself that you are working – as brother Ajay Bhatter kept repeating – we are not able to understand. Even when you say you are eating for yourself, you are not eating to please me. Eat what is good for you – people don't listen. They say, "It may not be good for you, but it is good for me." *Theek hai* [fine], time will tell; wisdom comes in old age – generally because we want to be fools when we are young. We want to be independent when we are young; we want to show off when we are young, "I know, I know, I know." This starts at the age of three when a child says, "I know." It doesn't end; and when the man is eighty-five, when he is going to die and the son says, "B*aba!* You are going to die, why don't you make your will," "I know." – *Gayela!* – like the Maharashtrians say, *gayela!* [gone!]

So life is a school, and like a school it demands discipline. And what our sister from America had to tell us you know: again and again, even in a queue for food we are undisciplined. Whether you are in a hurry or not, discipline must not be broken. What is it that you will achieve in three minutes by breaking the line and standing in front? Have you ever thought of that? And that's for a plate – dinner plate. All the other people feel disgusted, this man who is an abhyasi for so many years, he is telling others something which he does not want to practice himself. 'Don't preach unless you can practice'. This should be the first law of life – applies to everybody. It is like a doctor who is smoking away and he is telling his patient, "Do not smoke because it creates lung cancer," and the patient says, "What about you?" And he says, "Don't be impertinent, I am the doctor," or he will say "Churchill smoked till he was seventy-six and he never had cancer." But the patient, he cannot afford to antagonise the doctor so he does not ask, "Why should I not also think that if Churchill smoked till seventy-six…?" and he'll never get an answer, he cannot ask. So we are not able to ask these elderly people who break discipline, "Why are you breaking the line?" "No, no, I am in a hurry. My wife has been waiting all evening for me." "This evening you are going to make up for your lateness?" It is better to be late than to be called *the late*. You should understand the difference. Generally, when we break discipline on the roads, when we are driving or getting into trains, buses, one who is late becomes *the late*.

So, today's speeches, if they have been listened to carefully, each one has pinpointed a very important aspect or important aspects of Sahaj Marg, which are going abegging because we have only preachers, we have no practitioners. Therefore, by definition we have few abhyasis. We have few abhyasis; much fewer than we thought we had. Because out of all those in the rolls, the real ones are always hidden, silent – they are not flamboyant, they don't advertise. And always remember, speech is useless. And we only speak about something we do not know, or something which we need. When a man is hungry he says, "I am very hungry, I am very hungry, I am very hungry." After he has eaten he becomes silent. Silence is the language of God. Silence is also the language of fulfilment, of perfection, of achievement, and I hope all of you will learn to be silent *inside* where it matters.

I hope our elder people will remember that they have to be examples for the young. I have a system wherever I go, that we allow children to eat first, then the ladies, then only the gents. People who have visited Manapakkam will know that every Sunday we have a picnic lunch and this is strictly followed – children first, ladies next. And poor ladies, they are not used to this sort of treatment, because an Indian woman is generally the slave of an arrogant husband wherever he may be, whether he is a Bengali, or Madrasi or Punjabi, it doesn't matter. Our Indian women are subject to the arrogant pride of their possessors – their husbands, so they've never been allowed to go first. They have to open doors so that the royal husbands may walk regally through it. And when you tell them that today ladies go first, initially they are shocked; then they are surprised whether it can be true – such a thing in India; and then shyly they go. I want to put it into practice. Swami Vivekananda no less has said that, "A country which does not honour its women is doomed." This is the land of Swami Vivekananda, *vidvaan* {scholar}. Here we should practice it first. Children first, women second, only then gents, we men. If you claim you are protectors of children and your wives, show it in your behaviour. If you say you are loving, then show it in your behaviour. They must eat first before we eat. Respect them, love them, cherish them.

I would like to see all this happening, for your sake, not for mine.

Thank you.

16

Faith and Fearlessness

It is very difficult to speak just after a sitting, because I have felt as if I was down in a very deep well and my voice will not come out. I do not know what the programme for the next two or three days is, but I am happy to be with you all again so soon after my last visit.

Every time we speak in terms of *soon* and *not too soon* and things like that in a conventional way, we appear not to be serious about the passage of time and we don't realise that with each passing day, without exception, every one of us has one day less to live. In fact, with every passing minute we have one minute less. But I suppose it is one of the plays of the ego that we think we are going to be here forever. The life that we call spiritual is a very paradoxical thing. At the same time it needs no time at all and it can need an eternity of time, depending on each individual aspirant. Like examinations of schoolboys, we all believe we are the former category and we don't need any time at all because Babuji Maharaj said, "Turn your head from here to here and you are there." So it

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17 June 2002, Hyderabad, India

is nice to believe that we are all like that, and if not today, tomorrow we shall do it.

It is not a happy thing to remind ourselves that we may not have all that time. And we should 'step on the gas' (as they say in the US), press the accelerator, move forward quickly, because in an average sense we all need time. Babuji Maharaj always emphasised that time is the thing which we don't have as a renewable resource. In modern terminology, there are renewable resources – things which can be created again and again. Money can be made and lost, made again and lost, made again and lost; health can be lost and gained again – but time lost is forever lost.

While Babuji Maharaj said that we should work as if we are playing, the attitude should not be playful. Spirituality is a purpose towards which we must exhibit a great deal of seriousness that it is something which we have to achieve. The goal has to be achieved now – in this life. And I think one aspect of humility is to bring to it an awareness of time and say, "Well, why should I wait?" Even assuming that you have a hundred years more to live, why should you wait till the very end to achieve the goal of spiritual life? Humility says, do it today. Let me not do tomorrow what I can do today. Let me not do today what I can do now. And every time we have a sitting, where at least I go down into the depths of my Self, my Being from where it is so difficult to come out, and having come out, it is so difficult to in a very real sense face the world, face you all to speak, because there is that bliss, that calmness, that silence, that eternity which we don't have here. Babuji Maharaj used to say, "I am surprised to see that people, who have dived and tasted that condition, do not want it permanently." It was to him always a matter of surprise that how could we go down into that existence or go up into that existence (though you feel you are going down into it within yourself) – how could you go into it and not want to remain there permanently? Perhaps it's a case of that famous saying – "throw not pearls...."

We have, and we don't know what we have. Now unfortunately we cannot expatiate on this – we cannot say this is what you have. Each one experiences and must understand its value, its I would say enormity, in front of which this life is nothing, the worldly life is nothing. So we are experiencing the experience without the ability to understand the significance, the need to make it permanent, the need not to get out of it again. I think that is why these experiences have to be repeated again and again and again, until one happy morning we *realise* and therefore it is called Realisation. One happy day we realise what we have, and now we don't want to give it up. So in spirituality we are always talking of realisation. We have, but we don't realise what we have. It is like a blind man picking up a lump of gold thinking it to be a piece of rock and throwing it away, and somebody else comes and says, "What is this? This is gold." He says, "What do I know? Because with all the other senses it was a rock to me, with vision I would have seen the difference." So it is also called *darshana* – to see. In a sense we are blind because we don't know what we have. We don't know it is gold and we think it is a stone and throw it away. But we have it.

Spirituality is not just a means or a practice to take us to the condition that we have to keep, which I think is fairly easy. At least in my case I have had this taste of ultimate samadhi within six months of my going to Babuji Maharaj. But to know that this is something for which we have gone to him, to know that this is what has to be made permanent in my condition, in my life – that takes time. So at the same time, it is an achievement, and achievement must educate us into the nature of that which we have achieved; enable us to see what it is that we have got; appreciate what we have got so that we don't lose it but continue our endeavour in day after day of our practice to make that a permanent possession in the sense that now the condition possesses me. There is no more question of my giving it up. I am possessed by my condition, by my spiritual condition. In normal terminology, the word possession is used in a different sense – by spirits and things like that. But really, in spirituality, possession should mean that I am possessed by the Divine condition which has taken hold of me and will not let me go.

So I hope all of you will try to repeat this experience, sitting after sitting not merely when somebody is giving you a sitting, but in your own sittings – because that is where the importance is. We are not like patients in a hospital who are given a wash by the nurse once a day or once in two days, but we have to go home and bathe. So I repeat that spirituality (thanks to my Master, thanks to Lalaji Maharaj the founder), the spiritual condition, is so easy to achieve. I mean it is too ridiculously easy as far as I can see. I mean you don't have to do any contortions, no *asanas* [postures], no *pranayama* [breath regulation], no *pratyahara* [withdrawal of the mind], none of these steps, arduous steps. It is not necessary to be celibate, to give up food, to go to the jungle. Live a normal human life. Perhaps it is unfortunate that we get these conditions so easily because then we don't understand their value, we think that this cannot be it. Often I think this *advaitic* [non-duality] phrase *neti! neti!* [not this! not this!] is unfortunate because there must be a stage where you must say, "This is it." But we are trained to say, "No, no this cannot be it, because it is too easy. How can a man get, in the first six months, the taste of that highest condition? *Nahin*, *nahin* [no, no] sir, there must be something higher." This is the foolishness, this is the fallacy into which the intellect throws us that because I, knowing I am a human being with all his weaknesses, human foibles, human limitations, have yet achieved something, means my very humanness will not permit me to accept that my master has made it so easy for me to achieve this.

So in a sense, we want to be yogis in the old sense – isolated in the jungle, subject to all these arduous practices of the ashtanga yoga. Then we can prove to ourselves: "Nahin sir, after fifty years *I* have got this, I have laboured for it." Like anything else that we get too easily we don't value it. *Tuchha* [the lowest thing] we say. So our prefects should educate you all to understand the significance of what happens during a sitting. People just say, "Oh, it was very deep, I don't know what it is all about." A well is very deep, a coalmine is very deep, in sorrow you can go very deep. So what is this *deep* that is spiritual? And how deep can it go? It is not without meaning that when saints pass away, it is called *Mahasamadhi* – a samadhi from which they do not come out again. Our aim should be that every time we sit in meditation, we should not return. "*Yad gatvaa na nivartante, tad dhaama paramam mama,*" says Lord Krishna. That condition or that stage or that world, whatever you may want to call it, from where nobody returns – that should be my goal. And it can very easily be our goal. Yesterday I was talking in Calcutta and I said, "At that point if you are afraid, you are thrown back by the condition into this ordinary human condition where you are 'you' all over again. And we feel happy that, 'No, no sir, I was at the brink, I felt lost, I was afraid so I opened my eyes'." How unfortunate! How unfortunate that at the moment of revelation, realisation, the achievement, the climax, one withdraws! And then you would have to do it again. Perhaps you will get it, perhaps not, because when the fear is there now you are afraid to go into it.

So, in spirituality there cannot be fear. Fear has no place in spirituality. It is not that we have to be fearless and then do it – we have to do it and be fearless. Whatever may come is my Master's blessing. Whatever condition I may have is given to me by the great Master. Whatever may happen to me in that condition is what he wishes should happen. Without this faith, without this idea that it is he who is giving us everything and it cannot be but good for us, essential for us, what is ultimately desirable by us – we fall short of the goal, because we are afraid. And we keep coming and going, going and coming, going and coming; endlessly we keep going and coming, sitting after sitting, life after life, eternity after eternity.

So to condense the spiritual adventure into one sitting is it possible? Yes. How? Faith and fearlessness. Faith, that he gives everything. Whatever may happen during a sitting, Babuji Maharaj has said is good. You may see what you think are spirits; you may feel that the earth is vibrating; you may think earth has opened and you are going in like Sita – it is still good. Because it is in a subjective experience of an infinitely enormous or enormously infinite experience which our senses and our mind cannot comprehend, cannot evaluate, cannot assess. So we say leave the mind alone, leave the senses alone – they have no place in this divine adventure.

Then comes fearlessness, because fear after all is a reaction arising out of the awareness of a sensory perception. So in a sense we have to give up the senses, we have to give up the mind because, again to repeat what the Upanishad says, "The mind cannot know it; the voice cannot speak it." So what shall we speak about? What shall the mind understand? It will only react with its customary reaction to anything that it has not experienced before, which is the reaction of fear. So we have to give up *all* fear. Not after, but before. Our approach has to be fearless. I once wrote to Babuji Maharaj that I did something stupid and I was afraid of meeting him. He said, "Cast away this fear because it will stop your expansion, your spiritual expansion." Where there is fear there cannot be spiritual expansion.

It is not that we become fearless after we become advanced in spirituality. We cannot advance in spirituality as long as we are afraid. We cannot be afraid of the Master; we must not be afraid of the Master. Therefore we talk of love, because where there is love there must be no fear, there cannot be fear. We must not be afraid of the method, because it is again given by the Master. And the Mission is the house from which it operates – the organisation. And we must not be afraid of that, because many people say "No, no, the way this organisation is going sir, there is too much organisation, administration, *ityaadi, ityaadi* [et cetera, et cetera]."

Your connection is with your Master. Do what he says. Do it correctly. Do it faithfully. Do it fearlessly.

Thank you.

17

Our Objective—Humanity is One

While I was travelling to Calcutta from Chennai, I was looking into the flight magazine (Jet Airways). I think there is an article by the Dalai Lama, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, saying that love is supreme. I was surprised that the Dalai Lama should talk about love now. And it is a phenomenon throughout the world that people are now talking more and more of love and things like that. But when I entered Banaras University, way back in I think 1943, '44, something like that, like the students of those days I had an autograph book and we used to collect autographs from friends, professors. Dr Radhakrishnan was my Vice-Chancellor, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and he wrote in it: "Love is not Love which alters when it alteration finds" – sort of in a poetic way.

Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds – that is the love about which we speak in Sahaj Marg, because love cannot change according

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Ground breaking ceremony for the Temporary Meditation Hall in Zonal Ashram, 19 June 2002, Thumkunta, Hyderabad to circumstances or with age. This is not a worldly love where a husband will put away his wife because she has become old and creased in face. This is a love which must be eternal. *Nothing* can alter it because it is here [pointing to heart], it is not there. Worldly love depends on the object. Eternal love, divine love, depends on he who loves. That is one reason why Babuji gave us the slogan 'Love Him who loves all', because only He is capable of loving everything: the beautiful, the ugly, the crooked, the thief, the saint, the charlatan, the rogue. In His vision there is no difference.

I had a colleague in my office and whenever I saw him, I used to have a sense of hatred for him because he had so many qualities. I felt troubled by this because I felt I was, in a way, corrupting myself. So I wrote to Babuji: "Babuji, this is the fact; and even when he comes into my room, I feel hatred." Babuji Maharaj wrote to me. It was very strange because I wrote on a Monday and I received his reply on a Friday – all the way from Madras to Shahjahanpur and back, which shows perhaps the importance of the communication. He said, "Parthasarathi, remove this hatred from your heart." And he wrote something which is very significant. He said, "No man is bad. God did not create bad men. They, by their thoughts and their deeds, reflect *badness*. A man is always good, whether his thinking is good or bad, whether his actions are good or bad. So you can judge a man and say that his action is bad; but you cannot ever say that he is bad."

Then of course we have the old story in the Bible of the return of the prodigal son, who went away, after a quarrel with his father perhaps, and came back twenty years later. And he was received with all the love – the fatted calf was sacrificed and cooked for him; special dresses were made for him. Of course, the son who was at home probably thought, "Here I am with him for twenty years and I never got this reception." But then he had received his love for twenty years, which that other poor fellow had to enjoy from a distance, and which protected him and brought him back.

So, we have to cultivate love in Sahaj Marg. All this blah, blah of sadhana and p*addhati* {system} and all... of course, they are the means to an end. And what is the goal? The goal of human life is to create universal love.

Ever since the era of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, there used to be tree-planting sessions, what they call *vanamahotsava.* A lot of *pataatop* {pomp}, a lot of flamboyance, a lot of press reports and things like that. And I don't know where all those *vanas* {jungles} went. Trees were planted, saplings were planted, sententiously, sanctimoniously, very publicly. But I have come to believe, after being with my Master for so many years and he used to repeat to me all the time, that where bhaktas are gathered – real bhaktas, not like in temples – they are not bhaktas, they are beggars. Some beggars are begging for *naya paisa*; some beggars are begging for a little higher things like marriage of their daughter, *alludu's* {son-in-law's} good job, and things like that, but everybody is a beggar. Ipso facto, they are all beggars in temples and I am sure God must be nauseated – "What is my

Divinity if I am only able to attract beggars?!" He may be the president of India, he may be the governor-general of Australia, he may be anybody, but he is coming only to beg. And one who comes to beg is a beggar. Babuji Maharaj has very clearly said that praying is begging. So we don't pray. Our prayer only reflects a certain state: What I am; what is hampering my goal or progress towards my goal, and what I wish to be. It is a very clear statement of fact.

So, coming back to this idea of bhaktas, where they are gathered, he says that when there is a gathering of bhaktas, grace descends. And coming back to the analogy of the trees and the vanamahotsava – rain stops falling when there are no trees. Mass denudation of the land by cutting of trees has impoverished our country, is desertifying it slowly, as anybody knows who has the intelligence to think about it. We don't need politicians to tell us; every one of us knows. So there was a feverish activity in planting trees.

We have built an ashram in the Himalayas. All of you know Satkhol – and when you go there you will weep, because there is so much dust, even the Himalayas are invisible. Mr. Verma has been there; Mr. Brahmanandam – they have contributed their mighty efforts to building those ashrams. And it's a tragedy that sitting up there almost at seven thousand feet, you cannot see the Himalayas because of the dust. Trees have been destroyed by human avarice, stupidity, love for money.

So if you plant trees and become capable of generating new forests, rain will come there. The vanamahotsava had the principle that rain is attracted where trees are, though initially you have to water the trees to make them forests. I have come to the conclusion that we must have not vanamahotsava but *janamahotsava* – where our human beings, our abhyasi brothers and sisters with love for the Divinity in their hearts, one goal, one Master, one Mission, one method in their hearts – when they gather, the divine grace of my beloved Master must descend. *Must,* because it is waiting – grace is ever waiting to descend, like a mother is waiting to shower her love; a father is waiting to shower his generosity. And my Master said, "I need *patras* [vessels]; where are they?"

One saint sitting in one jungle will not attract much; but if there are a hundred saints, there is a gathering. Therefore, it is called *sat-sang* – being with the *Truth*, living in truth, living by truth, and establishing the truth all over again for others to live by. So what our brother Rajagopala Reddy called a commune – the hope is, the expectation is, that there will be grace pouring down on these settlements that we are trying to create in different parts of the country. We have succeeded in many places. Of course, outwardly the idea is that when a hundred families live here, the ashram will be used; it will, what they say in Hindi – *chamkega*; it will shine. It will be like a spiritual beacon.

When I established the Satkhol ashram, I had jokingly told some abhyasis that this must be a beacon for the entire universe on that side of the Himalayas. Manapakkam is the pole of one magnet; Satkhol is the other pole of the same magnet. So I am trying to imagine that with my Master's grace, with his blessings, this spiritual magnet, like all magnets, has a field. And if it is a powerful magnet, the field is big. And what is the field of the magnet that we are talking about? *You* are the field. As long as we are able to eschew hatred, prejudice, and all these communal feelings that 'I am this and you are that' and anything that divides humanity must be thrown off. There is nothing sacred which can divide humanity. Sacred can only unite humanity. Anything that divides human beings must, by that very nature of its dividing quality, be obnoxious to Divinity.

I am sure God does not want anything that divides human beings, into cults or races or classes or communities. Babuji went to the extent of saying prefects are not successful in their work because they say, "He is not an abhyasi." He said, "Who are you to think in such terms? You are here to make abhyasis. Not to say he or she is not an abhyasi. Why are they not abhyasis?" It is a criticism on their work. So that was the lion heart of the great master Babuji Maharaj. If you say this man is not an abhyasi you are thinking such a thought with the power of a prefect, and that man will never be an abhyasi – thanks to *you*, thanks to your stupidity, thanks to your prejudice that "I am an abhyasi and he is not an abhyasi." By such thinking we create barriers, unknowingly, ignorantly, stupidly and perhaps arrogantly.

So, brothers and sisters, as far as God is concerned, there is no such thing as Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu or India or Germany or Pakistan. I am proud to say on this auspicious occasion, that we have five prefects even in Pakistan [applause]. We have centres in Karachi, near Lahore. And they are all not the Indians from here; they are original Muslims living there – original Pakistanis [applause]. So, as I was telling brother Rajagopala Reddy two days back, Sahaj Marg will achieve what governments cannot achieve, what nuclear missiles cannot achieve, what war can never achieve [applause]. How does it achieve? It achieves through *love*. Love of human beings, for other human beings. They are our brothers and sisters. In love there are no borders. There is no Indo-Pak border for Sahaj Marg. There is no Indo-European border for Sahaj Marg. For me, America is here; and India is there in America too. That is why I wrote that book, which Babuji liked very much – *India in the West*.

We are taking India wherever we go with us, because we take the love that is India, the hospitality that is India, the universality that must manifest itself in Indian hearts. We are One – Humanity is One. This is the objective that we are working towards. It is the objective which by the grace of our Master, by his love for humanity, by God's wish that humanity should be One, cannot fail in being achieved – provided we are honest, faithful and we strive towards this goal.

This must be our endeavour. And I pray to Master to give us the strength of purpose, a long life and the vigour with which we can carry out this aim. Because when we have noble ideals to work for, age cannot interfere with it, health cannot interfere with it. Babuji Maharaj went to the extent of telling me once, "When you do Nature's work, Nature has to work for you. It must support your endeavours. It can never go against you." May it be so.

Thank you very much.

Heartspeak 2002 Volume I

'It is service that must distinguish a master from the rest of the people. A master is not one who commands, a master is one who serves. This was an ancient tradition in India, long forgotten. Today masters say, "Serve me, give me, worship me, praise me, honour me ...", but a spiritual master must serve, and he is called a master not because he is master of others, but because through ardent love of his master, through dedicated practice of the spiritual way, through an inner resolve to make himself as his guru, he has mastered himself. So a master in spirituality is only a master of himself, of nothing else. He is a servant of humanity. Service without servility, said my Master.'

P Rajagopalachari

Heart Speak 2002 Volume I contains the talks and discourses given by Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari in 2002, including his messages at major celebrations and talks given in various parts of India. They provide wonderful insights and guidance to all seekers of the Divine on matters both spiritual and worldly.

Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari was born in India in 1927, and is known to many as a truly universal human being, having transcended cultural and religious boundaries and providing support to students from all countries and backgrounds. He was raised in the rich spiritual heritage of the East and extensively educated in the Western tradition. As the spiritual head and president of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission, he has travelled widely over the last thirty years, offering his services and spiritual guidance to seekers.

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ISBN 978 93 80335 80 3
9 789380 335803

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Spiritual Hierarchy Publication Trust

P.Code 1360